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CLAY AND FIRE

CLAY AND FIRE

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NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1914

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PRINTED BY THE RIVERSIDE PRESS LIMITED
EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

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THE ASCENDANT CURVE

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*“ Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward,
and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to
the earth ? ”*

INTRODUCTION

Two thousand years ago the Roman world was weary, full of perplexities, tired of luxurious life, sceptical, bitter. And then from mysterious Egypt came the bright goddess Isis, offering solace to the rich ennuyé, promise of future happiness to the beggar and the slave. All over the Empire were built temples to "Isis the Great, Mother of the Gods, Ruler of the Heavens, of the Earth, and of the World below," temples with their prophets, stolists, and pastophori, their long-robed priestesses, their statues of the goddess bearing the sistrum and the cross of life, or holding the infant Horus in her lap.

What was the reason of this extraordinary spread of an exotic religion ? Plutarch gives it to us. It is that "all beings must be aroused and liberated from the moral and physical state of torpor into which they are ever liable to fall." This liberation, this exaltation, the Roman found in the Iseum after he had ceased to find it in the temples of his own gods.

And then came Christianity, and overturned the gods both of Egypt and of Rome, and gave to the world inspiration and hope which lasted it for eighteen

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hundred years. The body of Christianity remains—its churches and its priests, its rituals and festivals and fasts—but its soul is dying. Many of those whose vocation it is to teach it preach a “rationalised” religion utterly without inspiration, or hope, or beauty. The others, still defiant of “progress,” more noble if less advanced, adhere to the Creed by closing their ears and blinding their eyes.

In these days, we have lost belief, and yet in all the pitiful and tortured ways of man, in his baseness and his pains, in his terrible perplexities, his fierce appetites and sodden joys, there is still one desire that sings always in his heart. He would know the spirit that lives within him: he would know that which we call God.

Whatever his condition, however far sunk in misery he be, however world-bound, and lost in sense, and lost in the struggle for little things, in his secret soul he seeks God.

We who live now are very far from God, farther from Him than man has been at any time before. His Face is veiled from us, and the cloud that veils It becomes darker continually.

We look forward, and find nothing but an elusive hope—the hope that in some way, at some time, increased knowledge will give increased happiness to us. Drunken with what we call our progress, we imagine a paradise on earth, in which all the sciences will

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minister to our comfort, all the arts to our enjoyment. And in this dream there is no thought of God. And even as we dream, we know that our dream is false, and that there can be no happiness without God. The fair garden that we hope to win is full of poisonous fruit and deadly flowers. Our life is of less value than clay, for we know not Him that inspired into us an active soul, and breathed into us a living spirit.

We are near to death, and we do not know it. Now, if ever since the angel with the flaming sword closed the gates of Eden, does man need comfort, inspiration, hope ; and there is none. What comfort can he find in the Gradgrind ideal of eugenics, what inspiration in the irresolute opportunism of the pragmatists, what hope in Positivism, with its creedless creed, without soul, without God ?

Man progresses, but which way are we progressing ? We despise the past, because it was more ignorant than ourselves of material things. So might the worm, learned in the qualities of earth, despise the butterfly, who knows only the joy of the air.

We must look, not to the new, but to the old : we must look back, to the glories of the past ; and, if we would know truth and walk amid the stars, and see again those bright palaces of heaven, even from the pit into which we have descended, and hear the melody of the spheres, we must forget the dismal, perverse materialism in which we are living : we must

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try to know something of the beauty that was the birthright of those who lived before us: we must try to realise that he who knows not beauty can have no fellowship with wisdom.

And the first thing needful is that we should see clearly, should understand how far we have fallen, how little the decantated progress of to-day is really worth.

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But we must look forward, too. Not to the dreary, horrible prospect that the materialists offer to us, going down to the Chambers of Death, but to a future in which what we have lost will be regained, together with the power over the forces of nature that we have won at such a great price.

It is because I believe that there is ground for hope; that Fate is kinder than she seems now; that the causes of our pessimism can be regarded in another and the true light, and that in this light they are seen to be causes of hope; that the things which now confuse and sadden us, when viewed in this other light, are found to take their places in the appointed Order, to be part of the eternal Harmony, that these pages are written.

PART I



I

THE GREAT PARADOX

IS there any hypothesis that explains the supreme Paradox of the present condition of mankind ? On the one hand, we see an advance in knowledge of nature, in power to use the forces of nature, that surpasses, in almost inconceivable degree, the progress made in any other period. This knowledge, this power, have increased since the beginning of the last century, not, as in preceding centuries, slowly, painfully, but in each decade with continued acceleration, until we have now reached a point at which no knowledge seems beyond our grasp, no power impossible. We are conquering the air—the greatest achievement of mankind over nature since the building of the first frail and tiny boat ; in means of communication with each other our power is becoming as that of the angels ; almost daily, it seems, there is advance towards the solution of some mystery, the bursting asunder of bonds that had confined us. Humanity feels that it has been a child, and is now reaching man's estate. It demands of its inventors quick passage to the uttermost ends of the earth, and they provide it ; it requires protection from disease, and its physicians obtain safety for it,

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immunity from plagues that once destroyed nations ; it asks new energies for its breathless industries, and the rivers and waterfalls are made to yield their strength, and soon the waves of the sea and the heat of the sun will be turned to a like use.

And knowledge of strange secrets is being won for us—secrets so subtle that, in our pride, it seems to us that the innermost mysteries are being unfolded, the meaning of all things made known. We use the ether to carry our messages ; out of a thousand tons of rock we procure a few grains of a substance so magical that alchemy seems no longer a dream ; the solid flesh is made transparent for us ; instruments that render a molecule visible have been devised ; in a dozen laboratories the ultimate secret of life is being sought.

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But, accompanying all these gains, the world has suffered many losses, and losses that far outweigh the gains. For, despite all our progress, the condition of mankind is becoming increasingly, desperately unhappy. Our attempts to persuade ourselves that this is not true are pitiful, futile, full of sophistries. We are all miserable, but each tries to argue that his own case is exceptional. Such optimism as exists is all based on expectancy : mankind cannot bring itself to believe that the increased knowledge of nature and the increased mastery over natural powers that have been attained in the past century will not, in the end, lead to increased happiness. It hypnotises

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itself with its own discoveries, its own inventions, its desolate ardours. Religion has gone ; the instinct of beauty has gone, with spontaneous and traditional art ; romance, rose-coloured and bright, has vanished ; the sense of mystery has vanished. The far Orient was the last refuge of hidden wonders and strange refinements, and now even the Cathay of Ming-Huang, with its imperial city of Ch'ang-an, with its poets and artists and skilled craftsmen, its porcelain towers and pavilions, its lovely gardens and marble bridges, its floating theatres on crystal lakes, the seven royal palaces, " dreams of sunset in stone," with their " thousand doors mirrored in clear cool waters "—all this has gone, and the China of to-day has one ideal, to become as utilitarian as America.

We talk of progress, and there are more suicides and lunatics and inebriates than ever before. We boast of our increased ability to fight against disease and death, and, while a hundred years ago neurasthenia was almost unknown, nations are becoming neurasthenic. We glorify our own achievements, and we find that we have fewer great men, except in the one field of material science, than mankind possessed at almost any other period in the last five hundred years. We talk much of peace : there is no peace. Everywhere, too, class is fighting class with bitterness that continually becomes more intense. For the first time in the world's history, there is war between the sexes, woman, dissatisfied with her old position of honour and of power, becoming the

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victim of a mental epidemic more virulent than any mania of the Middle Ages. For the first time in the world's history, the assassin of rulers, impelled by patriotism, or ambition, or hate, gives place to the anarchist, whose shadow falls on every Court and every chancellery, who employs dynamite as an argument in strikes, and is now threatening to use poison as a similar argument.

Our modern cities are irredeemably utilitarian, the most unlovely that the world has ever seen, whirlpools of greed and lust, of strained and futile effort. The consummation of success is a naked and shameless apolausticism less refined than that of the Roman decadence.

Even physically, we have deteriorated. It was with a fair garment that the soul was once clothed in Egypt and Greece, in Rome and Venice. Now, in the "advanced" lands, while women have still a fragile and pathetic beauty, which usually lacks any quality of distinction or nobility, virtually the entire masculine sex is unbeautiful.¹

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¹ I know that this assertion will be combated, and I am familiar with the arguments of those who see in the men and women portrayed in Egyptian, and Greek, and Roman statues, in the frescoes of Florence and the paintings of Venice, in Etruscan engravings and Assyrian bas-reliefs only selected and perfected types. But I fear, however plausible this reasoning appears, that we cannot thus comfort ourselves. If we go to the parts of the civilised world that are the least affected by what we call Progress, we find

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We measure all things now : how shall we mete ourselves ? What does it mean ? Must we lose all hope ? Can we see no farther than the clairvoyants of the generation that preceded us, who, nearly all of them, despaired ? Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, FitzGerald, James Thomson, many another poet ; Pater, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, many another philosopher—they all foresaw the grey days that we have now entered. “ I have marked how all good things are swallowed up in all things evil,” says Obermann. “ I have observed men and destiny, ever unequal, deceiving themselves unceasingly, and in the unbridled strife of all passions, the execrable victor receiving as the guerdon of his triumph the heaviest fetters of those evils which he has contrived

nobility of feature still the rule, not the exception. Some years ago I watched the examination by the immigration officials at Vancouver of a couple of hundred Sikhs who had travelled from India to the land which they believed a land of promise for them. Those men, poor and wretched and despised, had yet a nobility of countenance and of bearing that made the whites around them seem like creatures of an inferior world. In all countries to-day where there are still ideals, we find nobility of feature ; in countries without ideals we find degradation of type. Dr Forbes Ross's prediction that in two thousand years the average Englishman will have features of a gorilla-like criminal cast may be too pessimistic, but it is the conclusion to which many observers have come. A recently published book on “ Greek and Roman Portraits,” with hundreds of illustrations, seems to me convincing. One finds in it a good many ugly faces, but not a single ignoble face. The degradation of the Jewish type, once among the noblest in the world, is another suggestive development:

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to bring about." And the world is unhappier now than when De Senancour found relief from his pain in the virgin mountain air.

Is there no hope for the world ? Will no benign spirit unclothe our faded eyes and fill them again from the stars, give us again the joy of the vision of God and of beauty that the saints and mystics, the poets and painters, yes, and even the humblest craftsman of old time, possessed ? Let us, at any rate, not deceive ourselves. We are living in a time of intense achievement, many say glorious achievement. But all our triumph is in one direction—that of knowledge of Matter, and of how to manipulate it for our own supposed well-being ; knowledge of the things that Jeremy Taylor described as little, and base, and contemptible ; knowledge of which the conquest is accompanied, *pari passu* it would seem, by loss of other things of infinitely greater worth. In a word, we have gained something, but have lost sight of the ideal. The world, to those who lived before, was a golden vase full of emeralds and jacinths, a place full of beauty and of mystery, with heaven very near. To us it is a place of labour and of pain, with a vague prospect that, in the dim future, the labour may be less terrible, the pain a little abated—a vain lure, a way strewn with the perished leaves of hope. Our optimism is really the most dismal pessimism. We seem to have nothing to expect from the future but greater health, greater ease, more rapid travel, quicker, more complete methods of communication.

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Ever there haunts us

“ The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success ;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express ;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain ;
That all is vanity and nothingness.”

This, written by a tragic victim of the materialistic science of the Victorian period—that hideous science which would make man’s will and destiny the playthings of forces that govern blindly and with blind cruelty—expresses the despair with which the corollary of the doctrine that had its origin with Darwin has poisoned so many fine minds. Compared with this, even the fatalism of Dante, trusting to the ways of God, clinging still to beauty, and nobility, and the Divine harmony, is to be preferred :

“ Vuolsi così colà, dove si puote
Ciò che si volue, e più non dimandare.”

It has been in the ancient and perdurable civilisations of the Far East that the old beauty and romance and mystery have survived longer than in any other part of the world. In an essay that I wrote some years ago, I spoke of Japan as the one hope, the one nation which held out a promise of giving new ideals to us. I fear that I was wrong, and that the late Professor Charles Eliot Norton, in a letter which he wrote about

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my book, was right. "Should," said Professor Norton, "a second edition be called for, I wish that Mr Crippen would add a chapter in regard to the influence of the West upon the East. I fear that such a chapter would end with a note different from that with which the essay now concludes. The Orient and the Occident have joined issue at this moment as they never did before, and it seems to me questionable which of them is to prevail over the other. The brute force of our western materialism was never so strong as it is at present, nor were the allurements of materialism ever greater than they are to-day. To that force and to those allurements the East, especially Japan, is exposed as it never has been before ; and there are not wanting signs of her inability to resist alike the force and the temptation. But let us hope for good things, though the world at present give little reason for hopefulness. . . ."

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Is it possible that those who think cannot see what it all means ? It means that the world is sinking deeper and deeper into matter and that, as we sink deeper, while we learn to know more about matter, we more and more lose sight of the divine. It is strange that this very obvious truth should need illustration, but that it does need illustration is made evident to us continually. The idea of Progress has become to us a kind of Palladium : we feel that if this be destroyed we die, and that " while it lasts, we cannot wholly end." And so—to quote again from

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that overburdened spirit, who, in the clash and ruin of all that was old and noble, confessed that he could not see his way—"while souls are perishing" in this time when "too fast we live, too much are tried," we still cling to the vain hope that our children's children may be in better case.

The idea of progress, as it is ordinarily understood, is a false idea. There will be no progress in the socialistic or anarchistic or syndicalist State to which we are tending: it is not progress, it is retrogression that confronts us. There is no progress, there is degradation in our loss of religion, of art, of the instinct of beauty, of romance, of mystery, of the feeling of the immanence of the divine and of holy and wonderful creatures, cherub-winged and radiant. We are as the being who

"Sitteth wan and cold,
And sees the madness, and foresees as plainly
The ruin in its path, and trieth vainly
To cheat itself refusing to behold."

The doom is plain, and we refuse to behold it; the vision clear, and we will not see. It is necessary for us, if we would not lose all hope, to regard things as they are, and to try to find, behind all the perplexing and tortuous manifestations of life to-day, sordid and febrile and unnerved, something of the eternal Design, the Life of Lives, surpassing all life.

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This question of the meaning and the future of humanity is bound up and to a large extent dependent

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on another question—that of the survival of the individuality of man after death. I believe that, not only are the problems related, but that the solutions of both are to be found in the same direction.

There are certain doctrines and ideas that are loosely grouped under the unsatisfactory and rather objectionable word "occultism." These, for various reasons, it is desirable to avoid as far as possible. Nevertheless, the central argument in these pages is Oriental "occult" doctrine, and its connection with the sequent argument, in regard to the survival of the individuality of man after death, is based on the most celebrated of all the sayings of the Occidental mystics: "As above, so below." And this, essentially, is the same as the greatest of the sayings of the Eastern mystics: "Thou art That," which means that all created things are one, all divine, all related and belonging to each other. But to say that a doctrine is esoteric does not mean that it cannot also be found in exoteric teaching, and, as a matter of fact, Aristotle outlined the theory upon which my argument is based. Matter, according to Aristotle, "is the cause of the imperfection of beings as well as the cause of evil." It was Aristotle, too, who said that it was the fundamental principle of physics that God and nature did nothing in vain; that nature always tended toward something better; that, as far as possible, it always brought to pass what was to be the most beautiful.

This is what I have set out to try to show. I believe

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that by shutting our eyes to the existing position and tendencies of mankind, we make it impossible to apprehend anything of the great Design. "The only shame," wrote Blaise Pascal, "is to be shameless. Nothing indicates more an extreme feebleness of mind than not to perceive how great is the unhappiness of man without God." The world is coming to be without God, and it is unhappy, terribly unhappy.

Why deceive ourselves ? The Lords of the Law have ordained that the world must pass through this sorrow, this experience, and all things go to show that the sorrow is to be greater, the experience more bitter still, before the dawn comes, with a new glory that the pain has gained for us.

II

“UNTO STONES THE INCOMMUNICABLE NAME”

AMONG ancient and primitive peoples there are two traditions that are almost universal. The one is that God or the gods modelled the first human beings out of clay ; the other is that in a remote time, a Golden Age, the gods lived among men, ruled them, and taught them.

The Babylonians as well as the Hebrews conceived man to have been moulded out of clay. In Egyptian mythology Khnoumou, the Father of the Gods, is said to have made men out of clay. We find the same tradition among the Australian aborigines, among the Maoris of New Zealand, in Tahiti, in the Pelew Islands, and almost all over Polynesia ; in India, in West Africa, Alaska, among the Acagchemem Indians of California, the Michoacans of Mexico, the Peruvian Indians.

But equally widespread is the belief in a Golden Age, in the descent of the gods to earth. The Hebrews had their legend of Adam Kadmon, First Manifestation of the Hidden of All Hidden, archetype of creation, endowed with qualities making it possible to establish a new likeness “ between the image and

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Him who fashioned it.” The story of the descent of the gods was universal in Greece; it is found in modern Japan. In the “Book of Odes,” written in China about the year 1000 B.C., we read that “Heaven, having given life to men, raised up princes to rule them and teachers to instruct them.” These divine teachers were called *Shèng-jèn*—the word is often translated as “holy men,” but it means more than that, indicating divine wisdom as well as holiness. The *Shèng-jèn*, according to the legend, gave to the Chinese not only their religion, but their arts, their calendar, their social order. A similar belief is found among the Hindus, and the North American Indian shares it with the Carib and the Patagonian. The Chaldean and the Phœnician had their story of the divine man Ea-Han, who came out of the Persian Gulf and taught art, science, laws, and letters to men; and the Babylonian priests told of the mountain-house of E-Kur, where the gods, children of the same parent as the earth, had their habitation. The Viking Sagas told of the time when the god-heroes lived on earth and made laws for humanity, and the cosmogony of the old Teutons was as full as that of the Greeks of stories of communion between divine beings and mankind. Even the naked savage of Australia has his legends of a far-off glorious period, and the Toltec and Aztec had their mysterious Quetzalcoatl, god of the air, noble and saintly, who came from the north out of the unknown and taught the people the arts of civilisation.

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But we have to go to old Egypt for the most suggestive tradition—as, I think, we shall before long be going to her for much other knowledge, for the farther back we go in our inquiries as to ancient Egyptian learning and art, the more astonishing are the results. What preceded Menes ? At present, it is all mystery, that becomes deeper the more deeply we delve into the sand-buried relics of sixty centuries ago and find traces of strange learning, knowledge that, once revealed, was afterwards again hidden. The later Egyptians believed that the rulers who preceded Menes were divine beings, sent from heaven to teach mankind, and Dr Breasted tells us that in the Pyramid Age the people of Egypt had already begun to look back upon a time when sin and strife did not exist, an age of innocence, of righteousness and peace, an age *before death came forth*.

It is a matter for astonishment that Dr Breasted, with all the evidence at his hand, with his wide learning and deep insight, should have adopted the theory he puts forward in his “Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt ” as to the beginnings of Egyptian religion and culture. It is amazing that, blinded by the evolutionary doctrine, he should be able to regard such writings as the Pyramid Texts as the work of a people newly emerged from barbarism—writings which, with their mystery and beauty, their story of knowledge now long forgotten, their symbolism of an elaborateness never since equalled, tell in every sentence of ancient ritual and old and

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esoteric belief. Dr Breasted even attempts to explain away “The Book of the Dead,” in its various forms, as “chance compilations of mortuary texts, hymns, etc.” We could explain away the Bible and the English Book of Common Prayer in the same way.

We are beginning to have a little more respect for legend. We have found so often that the despised traditions of barbaric peoples are corroborated by our own researches that the attitude of a few years ago has been a good deal modified. But so far no scientist has dared, in face of the universal belief of his kind in the evolutionary doctrine, and its corollaries, even to hint that there may be a foundation for those world-wide stories of a time in the far past when there were men nobler, wiser, nearer God than the men of to-day. To do so would be to stultify the cardinal theory of modern science—the theory that has become, not only part of the thought, but an essential to thought in science, philosophy, history. And yet the evidence, not against the theory of evolution, but against the concepts with which that theory has become interwoven, is now almost overwhelming.

The reverence that has been given to science is one of the most remarkable developments of modern times, but its explanation would appear to be simple. It is the reverence that we all give to efficiency, to

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thoroughness. John Stuart Mill, in speaking of the attitude of the public toward science, made one of those curious misstatements for which he was notorious, saying that the people, if they did but know the immense amount of caution necessary to a scientific experiment and the minute accuracy demanded by it, would "attach less value to their own opinions." The truth, of course, is that the public give altogether too much credit to science, confusing the credit that is due with that which is not due. They are continually making the error of the undistributed middle term. Because they can, as a rule, trust science to take infinite pains to obtain accuracy, to devote years of labour in order to win a detail, to make any sacrifice to reach truth, they think that they must accept every deduction that science may make from its experiments, every theory, however slender its foundations, that seems for the time being to harmonise and to explain.

It is a curious perversion, the more curious because, in another direction, people are just as cautious in regard to the statements of men of science as of any other statements. When Sir Oliver Lodge obtains a new chemical formula for us we take his word for it. When Sir Oliver tells us that he has seen a ghost we—or a good many of us—are incredulous. That is natural. What is strange is that if Sir Oliver should take it into his head to declare, as a result of his experiments, that he had come to the conclusion that the world was made in a certain way, most of us

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would straightway accept his theory. Indeed, we would probably go even further than he, and, where he merely put forward a hypothesis, we would find a proven fact.

Of all the doctrines of nineteenth-century science, that of evolution has been by far the most malefic. It has tinctured all thought, destroyed ideals, blighted enthusiasms. No bigotry of religion, with its attendant hatreds and cruelties, has ever had such a miasmatic effect. For, despite its glittering and plausible appearance at first sight, its offer to mankind of a future of an unimaginable glory, it is despair, not hope, that evolution, as it is ordinarily understood, must produce. To the savant, it may mean hope, inspiration. To the people, it means death. For, to the people, the reservations, the modifications, the extenuations of the doctrine are meaningless. The one idea they comprehend is that mankind has progressed from bestiality, and lower than bestiality, to its present development. The corollary of a theory of the non-divinity of man's origin cannot, by them, be evaded. If man be not divine, how can he survive death? And this idea has reacted on the thought even of the learned; until now the belief—in spite of all the evidence to the contrary—that mankind has advanced, must continue to advance, has become virtually an axiom. Is it not time for us to examine this obsession, this revolutionary Apocalypse of Darwinism, as Oliver Wendell Holmes called it, and,

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considering the evidence that has been obtained, ask ourselves to what it really amounts ?

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We find that there are two sets of facts, curiously allied to the two seemingly contradictory legends of the ancient races. On the one hand we have the evidence obtained by science, on the other hand the history of mankind so far as we know it.

To speak first of the progress made by science since the publication of "The Origin of Species." We find that modifications in a very large number of living forms have been proved : the history of the horse, for instance, can be traced without a break from the time when it was an animal no larger or not much larger than a cat. Another fact proved since Darwin's day is that the evolutionary process is not regular, but is at times greatly accelerated. It has been shown to the satisfaction of a number of eminent inquirers that "ontogeny is a recapitulation of phylogeny," by which is meant, to put it in a nearer approach to English, that the development of the individual from the embryo appears to be a rapid résumé of the development of the species. Every now and then the scientific world is described as being greatly excited by the discovery of a true *pithecanthropos erectus*, a veritable missing link. The latest of these discoveries, at Pilt Down, Sussex,¹ is declared to be far more

¹ The procedure adopted in the case of the "Sussex Man" provides a curious instance of the enthusiastic credulity with which science receives any alleged discovery that

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important than the discovery in Java in 1893, or the earlier discovery of the “Neanderthal Man.” Of course, for Professor Haeckel and his kind, the discovery of even the first *pithecanthropos erectus*, that in Java, was proof of the “incontestable historical fact . . . that man descends immediately from the ape, and secondarily from a long series of lower vertebrates.” It may be remarked in passing that Haeckel in this passage shows himself absurdly old-fashioned. The new theory is that man and the apes had a common ancestry. “There are not wanting, even to-day,” says Mr W. P. Pycraft, “those who will insist that Darwin averred that man’s ancestors were apes: with them no argument avails.” This is a dreadful thing to say about Haeckel, but, after all, the question whether we descend from apes or whether the apes and ourselves descend from some other animal is a comparatively unimportant one.

It is stated that the brain of the Sussex man (or woman) was as large as that of a native Australian supports the accepted theories of the day while requiring proof after proof of anything that conflicts with those theories. Without any reflection on the learning and ability of the two gentlemen who found the Sussex skull, it is yet well to remember that it was found in small fragments, and was put together by one of the gentlemen concerned in the privacy of his own laboratory. Even then, apparently, the result could only be properly expressed in a plaster-cast. The chances are, of course, that Professor Evans did his work accurately, but it would seem strange that in a discovery of this importance, or supposed importance, every step was not guarded for the sake of evidential corroboration.

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of the present time ; that no ape yet discovered has a brain more than half its size—that is to say, a true “missing link ” is yet to be found. But let us admit, for the purpose of argument, that the “Sussex man ” is the missing link. Professor Eucken has expressed so well the essential weakness of the “scientific ” position that argument would be but a paraphrase of what he says, and it is better to quote him. “In the case of Darwin and Darwinism,” he says, “the two chief ideas of descent and selection must be clearly distinguished from one another. The theory of descent receives so much corroboration from so many different quarters, and has demonstrated itself to be so immeasurably fruitful, that it can hardly be said to meet with any scientific opposition. The theory of selection, on the other hand, which for a time carried the scientific world by storm, has met with increased opposition. . . . Natural science . . . has more and more demonstrated its inadequacy. . . . One thing at any rate is certain : the situation does not appear so simple to-day as it did to Darwin’s enthusiastic disciples (Darwin himself was less dogmatic).”

And yet, it is on the principle of selection, not the principle of descent, that the attacks of science on the things that it fails to understand are principally based. On the foundation of the evolutionary theory, science knocks over all religion, all tradition, and—as I hope to show—defies a great number of “incontestable historical facts.”

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Now, there can be no criticism of science for setting up any theory that pleases it, in regard to the origin of man or in regard to anything else, so long as a theory is admitted to be a theory and so long as a theory—or a truth, so far as that goes—is not made to include categories with which it has nothing to do. Even if we admit that man has descended, or ascended, from an ape family (and it is a good deal to admit, in the present state of our knowledge) ; even if we grant, as a working hypothesis, that the Power which produced us or by which we produced ourselves used this method to work out its plans, science has absolutely no right to go further, and to force the theory to apply to facts which it will by no means fit. The amazing fabric which has been built up by the supposedly wise men of this time will, I think, in times to come be considered not only as tiresome as the lucubrations of the Middle Age dialecticians and the theological controversialists of a later time, but as one of the strangest phenomena in the history of the opinions of mankind. For, to keep their theory in its completeness from tumbling to pieces, men of science of to-day have to submit themselves to more mental inhibitions than an inquisitor of the seventeenth century. Haeckel, who speaks of all religious persons as “credulous” and of all religions as “irrational” and “human inventions,” refers to those who are honest enough to be convinced by the overwhelming evidence that, under certain conditions, inexplicable phenomena have occurred and continue

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to occur, as "led astray," "superstitious," victims of "lively imagination," lacking in critical power and in knowledge. That among these must be included Zöllner, Lombroso, Fechner, Wallace, Crookes, Myers, and many another eminent man of science, does not worry Haeckel in the least. They are all, he airily says, "defective in the critical faculty." All this, of course, is graphic of Professor Haeckel's own mental limitations, just as Sir E. Ray Lankester's remark to an assemblage of the most distinguished savants of England that they would be more profitably employed in discovering facts than in "telling ghost stories to each other" was indicative of that gentleman's manners—and of nothing else.

It would seem, indeed, as if the evolutionary-monistic theory caused an actual lesion in the mental processes of some of the most ardent of its advocates. How else can we explain the childish delight that so many scientists take in the use of newly coined words that serve only to obscure thought instead of clarifying it? ¹ And how else are we to explain such an amazing statement as this, by Haeckel, in his "Riddle of the Universe": "The higher vertebrates (especially those mammals which are most nearly related to man) have just as good a title to 'reason' as man himself, and within the limits of the animal

¹ Or is it a case of atavism? Perhaps our scientists are unconsciously impelled by the desire to keep knowledge within a limited class, as the Egyptian priesthood kept it, the Magi of Chaldea, the Druids of Gaul, the Gymnosophists of India.

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world there is the same long chain of the gradual development of reason as in the case of humanity. The difference between the reason of a Goethe, a Kant, a Lamarck, or a Darwin, and that of the lowest savage, a Veddah, an Akka, a native Australian, or a Patagonian, is much greater than the graduated difference between the reason of the latter and that of the most ‘rational’ mammals, the anthropoid apes, or even the papiomorpha, the dog, or the elephant.”

And here are more of Haeckel’s declarations : “The soul is a natural phenomenon,” “gradually evolved from a long chain of higher and lower mammal souls.” Science will “satisfy even our highest emotional cravings.” “Religion is generally played out.” “The ethical craving of our emotion is satisfied by monism.” Yes ? So all that man has hitherto felt to be most noble and most worthy, is nothing ? That which has made the saints and martyrs of every creed ; that which has been the one solace and the one peace of mankind throughout the ages ; that which has been the inspiration of most of the greatest art and poetry and all the greatest architecture ; that which has made the Bible and the Upanishads and the “Book of the Dead” ; that which gave us the “Bhagavad Gita” and the “Imitation of Christ”—all this is nothing ?

As for Haeckel’s astonishing remark about the reasoning power of animals, Preyer, in “Die Seele des Kindes,” says that a child one year old is “already

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far advanced above the level of any animal," and the late Professor Joseph Le Conte, who, ardent evolutionist as he was, was yet honest enough to see and point out the infinite difference between the lowest man and highest animal, said: "We may imagine man to have emerged ever so gradually from animals: in this gradual development the moment he became conscious of self, the moment he turned his thoughts inward in wonder upon himself and on the mystery of his existence as separate from Nature, that moment marks the birth of humanity out of animality. All else characteristic of man followed as a necessary consequence. I am quite sure that, if any animal, say a dog or a monkey, could be educated up to the point of self-consciousness (which, however, I am sure is impossible), that moment *he* (no longer *it*) would become a moral responsible being, and all else characteristic of moral beings would follow. At that moment would come personality, immortality, capacity of voluntary progress; and science, philosophy, religion, would quickly follow."

For the sublimest heights of philosophical impudence which science has yet attained we have to go to the proceedings of the British Association at its meeting in 1912. Without discussing the "sensational" presidential address of Professor Schäfer—it was found afterwards that even more "sensational" discoveries of a similar kind to those announced by Professor Schäfer had been announced by Mr Crosse

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at the British Association's meeting in Bristol in 1836—was there ever a greater piece of nonsense—successful nonsense—than the address by Professor Elliot Smith of Manchester? With no reservations, he gave an outline of the origin of humanity, tracing its descent from a “squirrel-like creature” and described the subsequent stages through ape, semi-man, and primeval man. He failed to explain that all this was as much a work of imagination as a romance of Dumas—indeed, rather more so, since Dumas had definite historic facts on which to base his novels, while Professor Smith had very indefinite evidence. Yet the scientists at Dundee swallowed it all eagerly.

After this we are prepared for Dr Carl Snyder's calm statement that the “riddle of life,” while a phrase “which will continue to adorn the pages of our popular magazines,” is a phrase “which has now no greater meaning than the ‘riddle’ of chemical action, or electrical action, or the existence of light and heat. The substance which develops the phenomena we call life is made up of the simple compounds of everyday life—water and oxygen and nitrogen, phosphorus and salts; nothing more. *There is no greater mystery in its composition to-day than there was in the composition of water or of nitre or potash but a little more than a century ago.* The central fact which endows this substance with so profound a significance is its ability to develop and reproduce—in a word, as we say, to grow. Dr Loeb has

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shown that the beginnings of this process *involve no mystical vital element whatsoever*, and the process may be initiated by simple chemical reactions with known substances. This substance again responds to definite stimuli, as light, heat, and the rest, in a perfectly definite and *more or less understandable way.*"¹

And here, I think, an aposiopesis is all that is needed. We are told that abuse is not argument: in some cases argument is superfluous, and this, surely, is one of them. But it may be remarked that these persons who call themselves Monists have not even the barren virtue of originality, at least so far as essential Monism is concerned. If, instead of straining and distorting the theory until it is grotesque and, in the profoundest sense of the word, blasphemous, they were to read a little more, they would suffer a good many surprises. Did not Oswald Croll, in his "*Basilica Chymica*," printed in 1609, say that "in every grain of wheat there is the soul of a star"—in which sentence there is more wisdom than in a score of the books of these philosophers of to-day? And did not Dr John Dee, in his "*Monas Hieroglyphica*," written in 1564, devote a whole quaint and very learned book to an exposition of the argument that all things are one? Which was a cardinal doctrine of the Vedantists and Alchemists and Sufis, of Plotinus and Paracelsus, of Raymond Lully and Avicenna, of Baptista Porta and Cornelius Agrippa.

¹ The italics are mine.—L: C:

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It was after he had studied the Kabbala with all the ardour of his eager and splendid mind that Pico della Mirandola wrote, in a letter to Aldus Manutius, these words : *Philosophia veritatem quaerit, theologia invenit, religio possidet.*

III

THE BLASPHEMERS WITHIN THE TENTS

SCIENCE, in a word, has played a gigantic hoax on us. It has not found the slightest fact, nor can it ever find the slightest fact, to justify its assertion that "soul" is a development of "matter."

The issue is clear. The scientists of the Haeckelian school say that body has produced mind and that what is ordinarily understood by the word "soul" does not exist apart from mind. We whom Haeckel and his kind politely describe by the epithets, "idealists," and "defective in the critical faculty," believe that matter is a garment and a veil for soul; that the body is a result of the soul, instead of the soul being a result of the body. There is nothing in this theory that conflicts with true Monism, but it conflicts essentially with the concepts that those who call themselves Monists have incorporated in the monistic theory.

Let us take a commonplace example as an illustration of this divergence in thought, "The flower," according to one scientist, "is merely the product of numerous centroepigeneses not entirely independent

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of one another : the corresponding simultaneous or rapidly successive activations of multiple centres, and the reciprocal action of these centres upon one another, would be indeed the agents by which modifications of each of the centroepigeneses is effected, so as to produce for example here a petal and there a pistil instead of an ordinary leaf." It is interesting, and even important, to know this. But why that word "merely" ? Is it necessary for the scientist to endeavour to explain away the beauty of the flower ?

To us the beauty is the all-important thing. To us the flower is divine, each rose, and lily, and chrysanthemum a reflection of the great Harmony, every poppy-sown field and meadow painted with daisies, every honeysuckled hedge and tropical forest ablaze with orchids, a manifestation of God. And science has no right to take this from us : science has no true argument by which she can take this from us.

They have no right to take it away. They have no facts which justify them in taking it away. They are thieves who have stolen what was most sacred and precious in the world and who, as discovery after discovery proves them mistaken, return to the world, grudgingly and very slowly, the things that they have stolen, the things which, of all man's possessions, were the most desirable, the most necessary.

A reviewer of Rudolf Eucken's "Main Currents of Modern Thought," after speaking of the "pathetic spectacle of conscientious people engaged in the

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embarrassing task of oscillating violently between the two extremes of materialism and romanticism," asserts that the "ordinary man," "pleasantly unmindful of the fatal contradiction, calmly occupies both positions at once." The "ordinary man" is as much a myth as the "man in the street," but even if we admit his existence, there is nothing calm or pleasant about his attitude. There is, rather, despair which leads either to callousness, or to a condition of pitiful perplexity, a condition so intolerable that the finest natures break down under it. It is the "disorder" which the greatest men have always feared beyond anything else, hated, and despised. "They are saved on earth who have attained *equanimity*," says the Vedantist poet, and "the good mind *ordered*" is an expression in the "Avesta." Plato speaks of the "disordered" soul as being as abhorrent as the base soul, and as suffering similar punishment, and Dr Johnson's fine capacity for scorn was never employed more unreservedly than when he was speaking of a man "unfixed" in his principles.

It was Dr Johnson who remarked that "human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth," and it was he who said of certain sceptical innovators of his time that "truth will not afford sufficient food to their vanity; so they have betaken themselves to error. Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull." It is a pity that we have not a Johnson with us.

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Of those who live now, it is only a few of the poets and artists whose lives approach happiness, and this because science is unable to harm them to the same extent as in the case of those to whom nature is not unmistakably divine. To these fortunate ones Nature "showeth herself favourably unto them in the ways, and meeteth them in every thought." They can find in a woman's eyes the secret that the laboratory will not solve :

"Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
Thee from myself, neither our love from God.

Yea, in God's name, in Love's, and thine, would I
Draw from one loving heart such evidence
As to all hearts all things shall signify ;
Tender as dawn's first hill-fire, and intense
As instantaneous penetrating sense,
In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs gone by."

When Rossetti wrote that he knew more than all the Haeckels and Schäfers and Ray Lankesters, and every poet, even if he be inarticulate, can laugh at these iconoclasts and blasphemers. But to others the teaching of the scientists has meant the death of the soul.

But there are now a good many signs that the dominance of materialistic science is coming to an end. The people are sick of it, and even more sick of the "rationalised " Christianity that is an offshoot of it. If there has ever in all the world been a more

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absurd and a meaner figure than that of the modern popular preacher, who makes his living by destroying the religion he has sworn to proclaim, I have never heard of it. One does not have to be a Christian to feel for this unique development mingled disgust and contempt.

Science, to put it bluntly, is being found out. Its reign, that began in the seventeenth century and reached its height of power towards the end of the nineteenth century, has been despotic, stupid, intolerant. The treatment of Galvani by the "scientists" of his day, the hounding of him almost to desperation by the parrot cry, "Frogs' dancing master," has been repeated in the case of every discoverer whose discoveries happened not to harmonise with the "regular" theories of his particular period. Occasionally (though very rarely), as in the unpleasant case of Haeckel and his doctored photographs, scientists have descended to dishonesty to bolster up their ideas. Materialism, in some ways, has been a worse tyrant than the Roman Church : the Church killed the body in order to save the soul ; science has killed, or set back, countless numbers of souls by its denials of all that mankind had regarded as most sacred. At one time recently, the word "science" was a mantram for the half-educated products of the English board schools, the American public schools, the anarchy-breeding institutions of the European continent. Now the Monist-Materialists are on the defensive. Their attitude is that of Pentheus in "The Bacchae."

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"I charge ye, bind me not ! I having vision and ye blind !" cries Dionysus. "And I, with better right, say bind the more !" says Pentheus. This is the manner in which science regards the old-new knowledge that is crumbling its once proud walls.

But the evolutionary obsession remains. Even such a clear thinker as Edward Carpenter fails at times to release himself from it, and his argument is vitiated to that extent. And Gilbert Murray, that humanist of the Renaissance born out of his right time, "venus trop tard dans un monde trop vieux"—he, too, is confused by the same idea. Writing of the civilisation of Eastern Greece between the years 470 and 445 B.C., he says : "To us, looking critically back upon that time, it is as though the tree of human life had burst suddenly into flower, into that exquisite and short-lived bloom which seems so disturbing among the ordinary processes of historical growth." The tree of human life did not burst suddenly into flower in this way. *Natura non facit saltum*, and neither does mankind. The civilisation of the Greeks followed and was a result of other glorious civilisations, of which archæology is only now beginning to give us a hint. Dr Murray, indeed, in this same introductory essay to his "Euripides," shows that he came near to apprehending the truth. He quotes the remark that if Aristotle could have seen through some magic glass the course of human development and decay for the

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thousand years following his death, the disappointment would have broken his heart.

But why a thousand years ? Had Aristotle been reborn a thousand years after his time, he would, it is true, have found that knowledge had almost disappeared, that the thought of learned men was being expressed by such a writer as Isidore of Seville, *doctissimus*, the encyclopædist, whose ideas of the constitution of the universe were almost as naïve as those of a savage. But Isidore yet realised that “without music there can be no perfect knowledge, for there is nothing without it,” and that is a saying of which we have lost the understanding. Supposing Aristotle were reborn to-day ? Would he not find the world sunk even more deeply into materialism than was the case in the sixth century ? And suppose Plato were to come back now. Supposing, in London, or Paris, or Berlin, or in one of the great American cities, he were to watch the crowds of passers-by. How would they compare with the crowds in his own Athens ? Of how many whom he met could he not say that if one looked into their souls one could see “their bad little eyes glittering with sharpness” ?

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Surely, if an old Greek were to return to the world, it would not be wonder, but horror, that would be his first emotion. He might wonder afterwards, but first would come shuddering disgust, distress at the ugliness of everything. In those enchanted Hellenic lands, where the heart of the world breathed faintly but

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where the bright smiling gods had not yet vanished, men made beautiful things as the bird makes its nest, the bee its cells. The potter turned his clay, and when he had wrought a vessel of which every curve was a harmony, he took his pencils and in black or vermilion painted the Sailing of Dionysus,¹ or the armed Eros, or some playful legend : " Look, there's a swallow ! " " By Herakles, so there is ! " " There she goes. Spring has come ! " And each line he drew with sureness, and each line was beautiful, for the secret of beauty was in him.

" We cannot compete with Greece," wrote Andrew Lang. " We cannot imitate her ; we can only admire from a distance, and painfully copy, by way of exercise, and hopeful that a shadow of her excellence may fall on our work, like pupils in the studio of a master." This melancholy, this despair are produced in all of us who are honest with ourselves by the contemplation of any piece of Greek work of the great period. Be it a coin of Syracuse, a vase of Megara, a little clay doll of Tanagra, the same feeling of leaden

¹ The black-figured cylix by Exekias in the Pinakothek at Munich representing the sailing of Dionysus, with the bearded god, ivy-crowned and holding a horn, lying in his magic ship, from which vine branches spring, bearing seven clusters of grapes, and which is surrounded by seven dolphins, is one of the most exquisite examples that have survived of Greek fictile art. It is more, being one of the very few pieces of Hellenic work which form a basis on which we can trace the connection between the art of ancient Greece and that of the Chinese and Japanese:

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dejection overwhelms us as when we read even the smallest fragment of Sappho, so perfect it is.

By what magic are Sappho's fadeless lines of fire and beauty made ? How was wrought the hyacinthine loveliness that no lyric poet has been able to imitate ? Sappho in herself should be argument enough against the poisonous theory of nineteenth-century science. Her place is incontestable, her supremacy as a singer unquestioned. And what have we to show to compare with the wonder and the glory of Sappho's verse ?

We can get from Liverpool to New York in five days !

IV

THE WANING FLAME

WHEN, in "Sartor Resartus," Carlyle wrote that it was better to be blessed than to be happy, he was expressing a truth of which, in all probability, he himself had but a faint apprehension. Of all men of genius, Carlyle was the most careless, and nearly the most dishonest, full of perverseness and puritanic hypocrisy. A single instance suffices to show how little he can be relied upon—his treatment of Cagliostro. He did not go to the trouble of verifying even one detail, and yet the ferocity of his attack on Cagliostro has hardly been surpassed in any historical work. But Carlyle was clairvoyant. There is inspiration in the passage in "Sartor" in which Teufelsdröckh, walking in the streets of Paris, is suddenly illuminated, throws off his depression, defies all the powers of evil to do their worst with him. And there is inspiration in Carlyle's aphorism that it is better to be blessed than to be happy.

In truth, "happiness" is a word that, though I must use it many times in the course of my argument, indicates at best a quality that is relative, that in its absolute, does not exist, perhaps never has existed.

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"Blessedness" does, or can, exist in a sense which Carlyle may not himself have realised except in moments of intense subliminal excitement. For, if what he said means anything, it means what Matteo Bandello meant in his dying words, "*Viveti lieti.*" It means what Nanak meant when he declared that "Only to sing the name of God is right and true." It is what the Sufis meant by *Hál*, the first Christians by *Love*. It means what Walter Pater meant in that wonderful conclusion of "*The Renaissance*": "To be present always at the focus where the greater number of vital forces unite in their purest energy, to burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy"—that is success in life, Pater says, and he tells us to "catch at any exquisite passion or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend."

And Baudelaire tells us the same thing: "One must be for ever drunken: that is the sole question of importance. If you would not feel the horrible burden of Time that bruises your shoulders and bends you to the earth, you must be drunken without cease. But how? With wine, with poetry, with virtue, with what you please. But be drunken. And if sometimes, on the steps of a palace, on the green grass by a moat, or in the dull loneliness of your chamber, you should wake up, your intoxication already lessened or gone,

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ask of the wind, of the wave, of the star, of the bird, of the time-piece; ask of all that flees, all that sighs, all that revolves, all that sings, all that speaks, ask of these the hour; and wind and wave and star and bird and time-piece will answer you: 'It is the hour to be drunken! Lest you be the martyred slaves of Time, intoxicate yourselves, be drunken without cease! With wine, with poetry, with virtue, or with what you will.' "

It is strange that this truth, this recognition of the

" : : : Desire
Of fire to reach to fire,"

apprehended in the Occident only by a few poets and philosophers, should be a commonplace in Japan, where for centuries there have been in use words to describe the exaltation of the soul which is the best that life has to give. *Matsuri* 祭 means many things—many incongruous things, it seems at first—holidays, religious ceremonies, flower festivals, patriotic and religious and poetic excitement. But behind all other meanings, in the mind of every Japanese, *matsuri* expresses the getting away from the prosaic, the everyday, the commonplace round of work and duty, and the lifting of the soul to a nobler plane. The Japanese can do this—or could do it—by the simplest means. Flowers, and lanterns, and a sacred place, a procession of grave Shinto

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priests in their flowing ceremonial robes, ritual and the solemn sound of gongs—this was enough to raise the consciousness, to make those who took part in the ceremony breathe for a little while the divine air and mingle with the gods.¹

There is another Japanese word, equally without a

¹ The resemblance between *matsuri* and the Greek *δρῶμενον* is of course obvious. "Etymologically," says Jane Ellen Harrison in "Themis," "δρῶμενα are of course *things done*. It is, however, at once evident that the word in its technical use as meaning religious rites, *sacra*, does not apply to all things done. The eating of your dinner, the digesting of your food, are assuredly things done, and very important things, but they are not *δρῶμενα*. : : : The act must be strongly felt about, must cause or be caused by a keen emotion. The great events of life, birth, adolescence, marriage, death, do not incessantly repeat themselves, it is about these events that religion largely focuses. When the getting of certain foods was irregular and precarious, a source of anxiety and joy, the eating of such foods was apt to be religious and protected by taboos. The regular rising and setting of sun and moon and stars, because regular, cause little or no emotion ; but religion early focused on things of tension and terror, the thunderstorm and the monsoon. Such manifestations cause vivid reactions. Tension finds relief in excited movement ; you dance and leap for fear, for joy : : : The next step or rather notion implied is all-important. A *δρῶμενον* is as we said not simply a thing done, not even a thing excitedly and socially done. What is it then ? It is a thing *re-done*, commemorative, sometimes *pre-done*, anticipatory, and both elements seem to go to its religiousness : : : The important point to note is that the hunting, fighting, or what not, the thing done, is never religious ; the thing re-done with heightened emotion is on the way to become so."²

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corresponding expression in English and seeming to

me even more significant—the word *ki-in* 氣韻. It

is used in speaking of works of art. In one of the most remarkable books ever written, Mr Henry P. Bowie's "On the Laws of Japanese Painting"—the work of the only Occidental who has ever learned the secrets of that art sufficiently well to practise it—we are told, in regard to *ki-in* :

"From the earliest times the great art writers of China and Japan have declared that this quality, this manifestation of the spirit, can neither be imparted nor acquired. It must be innate. It is, so to say, a divine seed implanted in the soul by the Creator, there to unfold, expand and blossom, testifying its hidden residence with greater or lesser charm according to the life spent, great principles adhered to and ideals realised. Such is what the Japanese understand by *ki-in*. It is, I think, akin to what the Romans meant by *divinus afflatus*—that divine and vital breath, that emanation of the soul, which vivifies and ennobles the work and renders it immortal. And it is a striking commentary upon artist life in Japan that many of the great artists of the Tosa and Kano schools, in the middle years of their active lives, retired from the world, shaved their heads, and, taking the titular rank of *Hogen*, *Hoin* or *Hokyo*, became Buddhist priests and entered monasteries,

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there to pass their remaining days, dividing their time between meditation and inspired work that they might leave in dying not only spotless names but imperishable monuments to the honour and glory of Japanese art."

There is, however, an even more suggestive word in this connection, a word that Mr Bowie does not mention. It is *fu-in* 風音 (literally "wind inspiration"). The sentiment is so delicate that it is only the literal translation that can convey a suggestion of its meaning.

And, finally, I must refer to one more Japanese word, *bo-un* 七王雲, for the knowledge of which we are also indebted to Mr Bowie.

It is related of Chinanpin, the great Chinese painter (says Mr Bowie), that an art student having applied to him for instruction, he painted an orchid plant and told the student to copy it. The student did so to his own satisfaction, but the master told him he was far away from what was most essential. Again and again, during several months, the orchid was reproduced, each time an improvement on the previous effort, but never meeting with the master's approval. Finally Chinanpin explained as follows: The long, blade-like leaves of the orchid may droop toward the

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earth but they all long to point to the sky, and this tendency is called cloud-longing (*bo-un*) in art. When, therefore, the tip of the long slender leaf is reached by the brush the artist must feel that the same is longing to point to the clouds. Thus painted, the true spirit and living force (*kokoromochi*) of the plant are preserved.

Kokoromochi 心持 (literally, "to hold the heart")

is still further evidence, if any were needed, of the marvellously analytical character of the Japanese language, expressing, as it does, a shade of meaning that no English word supplies—and that no Anglo-Saxon needs to express.¹

In these words of the Japan that is now vanishing there are expressed *nuances* of feeling of which no European language has been capable since old Greek. They tell of the divine ecstasy, the power to become intoxicated with divine things, the spark of the golden fire of God which, in man, makes him able to create in his tiny way some faint shadow of the great Harmony. It is this that the world is now losing, has nearly lost. In those old days, by the flower-embroidered springs of Ida, and even a little while ago, when the perfume of the wild cherry-blossoms

¹ For these illustrations from that wonderful organ, the Japanese language, I am indebted to my friend Mr Yoshinoro Yamakawa of Tokio.

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in the morning sun made Nara a place of enchantment, God and the gods were very near to man : now they are far away. Of the power of *ki-in*, we, sunk so deep into the material, can hardly know the meaning. What *ki-in* is there in the books of Arnold Bennett, Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, the others who take their places among the "best sellers" ? What inspiration is to be found in the Royal Academy or the Salon, the Monument to Victor Emmanuel, the costly abortion that crowns Montmartre, the Berlin "Dome," the Queen Victoria Memorial ? And as for the Japanese, the last nation in the world among whom *ki-in* flowered, they are becoming each year more like ourselves. Their old ideals are disappearing, with their happiness and their subtle arts. The flame is dying, the violet wine has been drained.¹

It may be argued that in the foregoing the alternating periods in any civilisation of what may be termed humanism and asceticism have been ignored. The intense activity in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries may be cited, following, as it did, what are called the "Dark Ages," and preceding a barren period. In Asia also there have been these alternating periods. There were in China, for instance, the Golden Ages, when the Ch'ang Ch'iens and Tu Fus, the Wang Weis and Li Pos, sang and painted ; times of intense and glorious activity, followed by

¹ The street decorations in Tokio for the funeral of the Emperor Mutsuhito rivalled in hideousness the worst efforts of the kind in Europe, even in England.

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periods when only encyclopædists and commentators were at work.

But the argument does not hold, and I think it is easy to show that it does not hold. It is true that after the Renaissance there was a reaction ; the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were comparatively sterile ; a glory had departed. But the instinct of beauty remained, and *that* is what has now gone from us. It is an instinct that had been part of the heritage of man, so far as we can tell, in every civilisation. However grotesque, however strange and bizarre the productions of, for example, the Assyrians, the Minoans, the Toltecs, the Incas, they all had the sense of order, of rhythm in line and form, of beauty—that same sense which enabled the mediæval monk to adorn page after page, however small his skill, with designs in which there is not a clashing curve, a colour discord ; that sense which, almost up to the middle of the eighteenth century, enabled the humblest craftsman in wood or plaster, in lead, or pewter, or wrought-iron, to fashion objects which now are set as copies in art schools. In the eighteenth century it was only the highly trained “ artists ” who made ugly things.

Has anyone ever seen an early illuminated manuscript that is not beautiful, a carved chest of any time up to the year 1750 that is not at least in good taste, even a sampler of the early eighteenth century, however crude, that is not relieved by some touch of quaintness ?

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This, however, is a digression into a subject which I will discuss more fully in another chapter. The illustrations used here have been employed only to emphasise what *ki-in* means. It is a reflection of that *Soul of Soul of Soul* of which Shamsi Tabriz speaks. It is the one precious thing that man possesses—and, in our day, the reflection is very dim.

I referred in Chapter II. to *ontogeny* and *phylogeny*. If, instead of allowing themselves to be blinded by the materialistic theory, our scientists would carry their own ideas to logical conclusions, they would see that this discovery that the development of the individual is a résumé of the development of the species leads to very remarkable results. For we find that the history of the soul of a man during one lifetime is a microcosmic picture of the macrocosmic history of mankind. We find that that which is divine within us pales as we grow older, that year after year we recede farther and farther from the star from which we have come. This blunting of the senses, this loss of attunement with the divine, is in nothing more terribly evident than in a process that goes on in us—a process that is hard to define, but which has its counterpart in the continually stronger doses which the victim of any “habit” finds that he must take in order to obtain the reaction he craves.

Beauty has less power, year after year, to make us *burn* in the sense in which Pater uses the word. The child can obtain infinite pleasure from watching the

THE WANING FLAME

branch of a tree against the sky, or, as Ruskin remarked, from looking at some horizon beyond which he can imagine the sea. But, as Ruskin sorrowfully confessed, this power of enjoyment of simple things vanishes. We need stronger and stronger draughts of beauty, until, in the end, we search the world for "views," and whereas once we could find delight in a tiny drawing, a Bewick woodcut, a little landscape by some obscure painter, now we are unmoved by a masterpiece.

Once, any subtle or splendid piece of colour, a cloisonné, or jewel, or flower; or any harmony of line or form, a Greek gem or Tanagra figure, could cause us to breathe for a little or a long time the divine air, to hear the music of the gods. Later these things lose their potency. We can appreciate them, we may be more or less learned in regard to them, can explain, as we could not when we were children, why they are admirable; but the magic has gone from them.

As, in the West, it is the poets who apprehend the true meaning of inspiration, so it is they also who realise this terrible sinking into the material. We are all familiar with Wordsworth's poem, but some lines with a similar motive that were written by Vaughan are less well-known, though, it seems to me, they are even finer:

"Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angell infancy.
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,

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Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white Celestial thought ;
When yet I had not walkt above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face :
When on some gilded cloud or flowre
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity. . . .

But felt through all this fleshly dresse
Bright shootes of everlastingnesse.

O, how I long to travell back,
And tread again that ancient track:
That I might once more reach that plaine
Where first I left my glorious traine ;
From whence the Inlightened spirit sees
That shady City of Palm trees.
But ah ! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers on the way.
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move,
And, when this dust falls in the urn,
In that state I came return."

As above, so below. The descent into matter, the descent from the gods, that all religions teach, is shadowed in the lives of all of us. Each of us repeats in his microcosmic way the story of the Fall. Some sink unconsciously, unreluctantly : others are shamed and disgusted : the Law is the same for all.

V

THE CROWNS OF DAHSHUR

OUT of gold and gems, enamel and lapis lazuli, red jasper and green felspar, a craftsman four thousand years ago wrought a crown to adorn the body of a dead princess, a crown of workmanship so subtle—glittering vulture with outstretched wings, aigrette of golden leaves and flowers, rosettes, and florets, and ornaments shaped like lyres—that no jeweller of to-day could imitate it. And then the Egyptian craftsman took more gold and more jewels, and made for the Princess Khnemît another crown, even more marvellous, a thing of such fairylike fragility that it seems as if a breath might shatter it. On tiny interlaced threads of gold are many little golden flowers with red hearts and turquoise petals, and there are six crosses of gold, carnelian, and blue, and all is worked together so perfectly that we can hardly believe it fashioned by human hands. There is a living goldsmith, a Jew from Odessa, skilful enough to make a tiara of Saïtapharnes, but no man living could make these crowns found at Dahshur.¹

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¹ I referred in a previous chapter to the fact that there has been deterioration in "all the arts but one."² There now appears to be doubt even in regard to this exception, for

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Above my desk is a little dark wood-carving of an angel, a fragment from some fifteenth-century church in Shropshire. The workmanship is of the rudest : the face of the angel, surrounded by a nimbus, is more like a sunflower than a face. In place of legs is a queer form like the tail of a mermaid ; the wings are impossible ; the one hand that is shown is an impossible hand.

And yet, no craftsman of to-day could equal that rude carving, unless he made a copy of it, in rhythm of line, in the quality that we call picturesqueness, in instinctive and spontaneous and joyous feeling. The man who fashioned it possessed something that has now been lost.

When we consider the work of men of higher skill, the difference between the old and the new becomes more plain. Such wood-carving as that in the " Tudor House " at Gloucester would be impossible of execution now, such carving and plaster-work as are found at Plas Mawr at Conway would perhaps be possible in reproduction, but certainly not in original design. And work like this, and superior to this, is found all over England, all over Europe. Some of it was done by travelling members of guilds, but, for the most part, the men who produced it were village or town craftsmen who had never travelled more than a few miles.

All the arts but one to-day show degradation, in recent discoveries indicate that the ancient Egyptians had orchestras more elaborate than our own, including instruments the use of which cannot be guessed.

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many cases degradation so great that they have virtually ceased to exist. We make occasional efforts to encourage an aloe-blossoming of some long-neglected form of skill, and very occasionally find a man who seems by some strange atavism intuitively to master mysterious and forgotten processes. But these cases are very rare, and nearly all the dead arts are suffered to remain dead.¹

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¹ There was recently one curious little instance to which I am tempted to refer, showing, as it did, that, in our present stage of degradation, beauty is not only ignored, but has actually become offensive, causes instinctive dislike. The St Gaudens ten and five dollar gold pieces were undoubtedly the noblest coins produced in any country in two hundred years. Within a couple of months the American public had howled them out of circulation. The explanation was afterwards made that the coins were disliked because the relief was inconveniently high, but a reference to the files of the New York or Chicago papers will convince anybody that the original outcry was against the design, and only the design, of these exquisite examples of die-cutting. But America has no monopoly of this instinctive hatred of beauty. It is exemplified in the vandalism that is now common all over Europe, the destruction of ancient and glorious buildings, usually without valid excuse. A characteristic example of this strange dislike of old and noble structures is provided by the Council of Croydon, Surrey. In the middle of that town is Archbishop Whitgift's Hospital, a splendid example of quiet and solemn Elizabethan architecture, a place of repose, a place for contemplation and for prayer. Its placid, flower-bordered courtyards, a few yards away from the silly, bustling modern town were an inspiration to Ruskin and to many others. The Croydon Council has been agitating for years for power to remove this building.

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In the last decade, archæology has really done more than natural science to aid us in the solution of the great problem. It has shown us civilisations antedating by thousands of years the earliest civilisations of which we previously had knowledge. It points the way to vistas of unimaginable extent, to conditions of high culture at times which we had thought belonged to the neolithic or even more barbaric periods. And, in the light of this new knowledge, how fatuous does the view recently held of mankind's story seem ! One would have thought that what had previously been known about such a civilisation, for example, as that of the Egyptians must plainly have pointed to very high development previous to the period which we regarded as historic.¹ Science,

¹ I have a theory that every writer now and then runs amuck, writes nonsense deliberately, and takes delight in doing it. How else can we explain Mr March Phillipps's amazing remarks about Egypt ? In the same volume in which he gives us one of the most scholarly and careful technical essays on Greek architecture that we possess, he has a couple of chapters on Egypt in which he makes statements that can only be described as astounding. He tells us, among other things, that " it appears very doubtful whether Egyptian architecture, or Egyptian art in general, was based on any clear knowledge of æsthetic principles, and whether, consequently, it has any æsthetic teaching to communicate to us." He speaks of the Egyptians, those " most religious of men," as Herodotus (who knew them) called them, as an " intensely materialistic " race : he has nothing but scorn for the pyramids, and speaks of the " dullness, amounting, it would seem, to the atrophy of the intellectual faculties, which the pyramid indicates as characteristic of its builders." This

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however, which strains at so many gnats, was quite willing to swallow such a camel as was involved in the supposition that this marvellous Egyptian culture, with its arts, its learning, its rituals full of beauty and of an elaborateness that has never since been equalled, its mysteries of which we to-day are trying to obtain a key—that this glorious civilisation was born, as it were, ready made.

We begin to apprehend a little of what the Egyptians knew and did, of their mysterious wisdom, of the beauty they created. We all know what the Greeks accomplished. As for Rome, most of us have seen at Pompeii that house of what was only a middle-class family, which yet, in its beauty and its grace and its delicacy, could not be rivalled, except as a bare copy, by the richest man of to-day, were he to devote his fortune to the work. The peasant of sixteenth-century Brittany, of England, Germany, Italy, Flanders, lived in a condition that the trade union labourer of our time would scorn. And yet that same

of structures so mysterious and wonderful, containing in their smallest detail so much strange and astonishing science that it is doubtful if in the next hundred years we shall be able to do more than obtain a faint apprehension of it! Ancient Egypt is a dangerous subject to handle unequivocally, for the more we learn about it the more evident does it become that secret and terrible knowledge, much of it now lost, was possessed by its hierophantic class. A sufficient answer to Mr March Phillipps's extraordinary statement is M. Rodin's remark that the master works of the Egyptian sculptors, either human or animal figures, "produce the effect of a sacred hymn."¹

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peasant decorated his hut with carvings which the millionaire now buys eagerly at great prices. He possessed a spark of the sacred fire which is almost extinguished.

It is generally agreed that of all the great European powers Russia is the least "advanced." The Russian peasant retains more of his ancient arts than the peasant of any other country. A volume, "Peasant Art in Russia," recently published by *The Studio*, is a revelation to those of us who were ignorant of the beautiful work still being done in Great and Little Russia. On every page there are illustrations of exquisite drawn-thread linen, of embroidery in gold and silk, of earthenware tiles and domestic vessels that rival in quaintness of design the productions of old Holland, of carved and painted woodwork that no London or Paris or New York establishment could produce at any price. But even more significant are the photographs of such objects as *valki* (carved wooden laundry beetles), *pralki* (carved distaffs), cake-moulds in delightful designs, egg-dishes in the form of birds, iron and copper padlocks in the shapes of strange monsters, smoothing-irons representing lions, many other articles which in the West are now hopelessly utilitarian and which we do not even think of regarding as possible of adornment.

Is it not strange that the Russian peasant, the poorest and most ignorant in all Europe, should yet make for himself objects of a refinement unknown

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in any millionaire's house ? Can we not read an obvious lesson in the circumstance that the one European country into which modern "progress" has not yet penetrated is the one country that retains the ancient instinct of beauty ?

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No loss that the modern world has suffered seems to me to possess more suggestiveness than our loss of the feeling for colour. There can be no argument here. That a faculty of humanity which survived in the West until the end of the fifteenth century then began to deteriorate, until now it has almost disappeared, is as evident as the world's loss of the sense of rhythm in line is evident, the failure of the Pierian spring of instinctive beauty. Practically every piece of old stained glass, for instance, is exquisite : practically every modern piece of stained glass is a failure. Even the secrets of the manufacture of those splendid crimsons, and rubies, and sapphires, and ultramarines have been lost ; but this is the least of the modern worker's disabilities. The fourteenth-century craftsman made a beautiful thing because the sense of beauty was in him. If the modern artist in painted glass succeeds in making something beautiful, it is after long training, many failures ; and his best does not equal the mediæval worker's worst.

Is there any modern decorative artist who, when he sees an illuminated manuscript of France, Italy, Flanders, England of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, can fail, if he be honest, to feel despair ?

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Even the illuminated pages which, in our superiority, we call manuscripts of the "semi-barbaric periods," Visigothic, Merovingian, Lombardic, Celtic—exhibit an intuitive feeling for line, colour, and decoration that no living craftsman can rival, or even approach. Consider the circumstances under which the "Book of Kells" must have been written—the barbarities, discomforts, deficiencies, ignorances which those who wrought it suffered. Where did the scribes who placed on the vellum leaves those exquisite involved curves, so elaborate that the eye can hardly follow them, learn their secret? Something has departed from the world, and the best that those of us who realise the loss can do is to display sufficient honesty to admit it.

It is the same with the arrangement and decoration of the printed volume. We all know of the brave attempts of William Morris and of many others to produce books equalling in dignity and in beauty those that appeared within ten years after the invention of printing. Not one succeeded. Those old master-craftsmen, working with none of the conveniences of to-day, working amid surroundings that would be regarded as insufferable now, could yet produce pages of a noble and delicate harmony that are the despair of the modern printer.

Is more evidence needed? Let any artist of to-day carefully examine the two splendid volumes, "Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art," by the late Professor Ernest F. Fenollosa, that have just appeared. If he

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be honest he will have to admit that the Chinese artists of eight hundred years ago created a wealth of pure beauty that simply dazzles us, that is enough to make an honest modern painter throw down his brushes and turn clerk or insurance agent. In the East, as in the West, each century has seen something disappear. One could make a list, beginning with the first century of this era, of arts that have either been degraded or abandoned. All over Asia, as well as in Europe, the same deterioration is to be traced. The arts of India, of Persia, of Korea are pitifully vulgar to-day compared with the glorious things produced in the past. In all India there is not an artist who could make the bronze "Nataraja" in the Madras Museum. And as for Japan, where could we now find such craftsmen as Kwaikei and Unkei, or men who could reproduce Kano Motonobu's dragon ceiling at Nikko, or an artist and architect such as Hiradi Jingoro, or a carver like Yoshimura Ichio?

Consider the Venice of the sixteenth century. Think of its colour, its glory of marble, of mosaic, of fresco, hangings of tapestry, embroidery from the Orient. We know what the city was like; the painters who lived in it—Paolo Veronese, Titian, Tintoretto, many another—have left a perfect record of it. We know how St Mark's Piazza, with its church of gold and ultramarine and pearl, its great tower, its loggetta, its wonderful clock, was filled by day and by night with senators in their dark robes, young men and women

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dressed in silks and velvets of purple and silver and gold, every imaginable hue and harmony of hues. There were fabrics of crimson and green and pale blue, silks *all' Alessandrina*, damasks and brocades and taffetas of turquoise and olive and carnation, materials shot with lapis lazuli and pomegranate. In the shops of the Bontempelli, the Pasqualini, a score of others, were shows of these materials uncut—stuffs from many lands, even from Persia and India—which made the interiors and, at every festival, the exteriors also, glow like treasure-houses of the arts.

This sumptuousness of life, this ordered excellence and continual striving toward beauty, encouraged the growth amid it of men and women of noble and placid bearing, with mobile, clear-cut features, with minds attuned to the harmonies around them. Look at the men depicted in the works of Veronese, of Palma, of Titian and Tintoretto. Regard, for instance, those splendid figures in Bassano's "Reception of Henri III. at Venice." They are portraits, and, as other pictures show, faithful portraits. Could any gathering of distinguished men to-day, in Italy, England, France, Germany, America, where you will, show such noble faces, such countenances of dignity and power? And consider the fêtes—I have picked them out as an illustration absolutely at random—that attended the marriage of the young Duke of Milan and Isabella of Calabria. When the Duke's brother went to Naples to escort the bride to Milan he and the many nobles with him were clothed in

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cloth of gold and silver adorned with countless numbers of precious stones : even their servants wore garments of silk, with the arms of their masters embroidered in silver and pearls. When Isabella arrived at Genoa the whole city was decorated, and everywhere hung festoons of laurel with gilded apples nestling in the foliage. The walls of the castle courtyard were draped with azure cloth from which hung festoons of ivy. The bride's apartments had been decorated with the utmost splendour. The bed was of untold value, both from an artistic and a pecuniary point of view; upon the counterpane were embroidered five lions in pearls. All around were glowing carpets, and the whole room was decorated with crimson satin. On the day of the wedding in the Cathedral, cloths in the Sforza colours were spread in the streets ; all the houses were decorated with carpets, satin cloths, and festoons of laurel and ivy. The goldsmiths displayed in the middle of their street an immense gilded globe adorned with four golden griffins ; a silvered column bearing a lion was on the top, while at the foot of the globe stood a child dressed as Cupid, who sang festal verses as the bridal pair passed by.¹

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We have lost so much ! Think of the Greek, realising all the subtlety of gracious curve, of rounded shadow, of the play of green water on white marble, the glory of chryselephantine combination of precious material.

¹ " Life and Times of Rodrigo Borgia," by Arnold H. Mathew, D.D.

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Think of the Japanese, knowing the wonder of moonlight upon cloud and sea, the secrets of flowers and exquisite animals, the movement of birds, the magic of fleeting shadow. It has all disappeared, or is fast disappearing, all a wreathing of flowers that death now wears.

Architecture, that perfect criterion of civilisation, tells the same story. The work done to-day is merely an echo of the work of the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines, the mediæval cathedral-builders, the artists of the Renaissance. It has been said that architecture indicates with absolute precision not only the stage of civilisation of a people, but that people's development spiritually. If this be the case, what can we think of the English people to-day, or the American, or French, or German ? We find discords so appalling that our modern cities could be made beautiful only by razing and rebuilding them : any attempt even to improve them seems almost hopeless.¹

¹ There is one detail in regard to ecclesiastical architecture of the present time that seems to me significant, and that I have not seen discussed. The interior of every modern cathedral and church, so far as I know without exception, is distorted, and distorted hideously, by the pews that are placed, in dreadful symmetrical rows, in the naves and transepts, absolutely killing the proportions between the vertical and horizontal lines of the building. Every architect knows, or ought to know, the deadly effect of these rows of benches ; yet, so far as I am aware, there has never been even a question, in regard to any modern religious building, as to whether the pews should be allowed or whether the old, picturesque plan of movable chairs should be introduced.

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Compare an American "skyscraper" of to-day with a temple of old Greece, a thing so wonderful in its subtlety of design that it is only within the last few years that we have known of the existence of rules of measurement of which we see the result, but do not know the secret. "Nothing," says March Phillipps, "in this strange art is what it seems to be. The most obvious facts turn out not to be facts at all. And the closer we carry our examination the more the mystery spreads and deepens. It infects the whole temple. It touches and alters cornice and frieze, architrave and abacus, capital and column. It reaches to the foundations and even to the flights of steps which form the approach to the building. There is not a single feature, nay, there is not a single stone, in the structure which is unconscious of this mystery or which is in itself the mechanically regular and rectilinear object it seems to be. In some slight and entirely unnoticeable degree the mechanical regularity of every stone is deflected, the deflection representing that particular stone's share in the curve or inclination of the feature of which it forms part."¹

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In other words, Beauty to-day is regarded as of so little account that she always must give place to comfort, to convenience.

¹ "Greek Refinements," by Mr William Henry Goodyear, the result of deep study of this question, is so far the best authority on it. On realising the meaning of what Mr Goodyear tells us, what can a modern architect do but bow his head in reverence and shame?

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Of all our pitiful self-hypnotisms, that which causes us to regard our museums as centres of progress and light seems to me the most amazing. They have completed a great extension of the British Museum; the immense new building at South Kensington has been finished, and opened with royal ceremony. The galleries of these two institutions contain treasures representing the fine flower of human achievement. And yet I would, if I could, burn every museum and public picture gallery in the world, and disperse their contents. They are graveyards. The treasures in them, torn from the surroundings for which they were designed, have lost half of their beauty, most of their educational value, all of their romance.

When I was a child I used to go to London every Saturday to visit a relative there. He was a collector of rare and exquisite things, and his little house was, to me, a place of unending delight, a place enchanted. One day I would spend looking at his books—the Cruikshank pictures of fairies; drawings by Rossetti, Millais, Leighton, Walker; Harvey's illustrations for "The Arabian Nights"; woodcuts by the English masters of that now lost art. Another day I would be allowed to handle the old blue china, and every piece meant to me a vision of the East. My uncle had pictures, old furniture, old things of every kind, and in time I knew intimately each object the house contained. Every Saturday night I would beg, before going to bed, for a sight of my uncle's ancient coins,

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which he kept, unscientifically, in a leather bag. There were Greek pieces, from which I learned more of classic art than in any museum. There were quaint Spanish coins, spade-guineas, groats. But the chief treasure was a splendid rose noble of Edward IV., in perfect state. How I would fondle that glorious piece of worked gold ! I can remember every line, every decoration of it, to this day. I believe it was the key which opened for me some knowledge of ancient English art. Now, in the British Museum, I can see, I suppose, a hundred rose nobles. At South Kensington I can see case upon case of old jewellery, I can go through galleries of furniture in which single pieces are worth all my uncle's collection put together, I can find Oriental china bewildering in its rarity and beauty.

And, "bewildering" is the word. I see these things, but I do not see them properly. Does anyone see them properly apart from a very few designers seeking patterns, and perhaps a handful of students ? And these designers, these students, almost always are attracted by the very conspicuous things, the rarest treasures by the greatest masters. The amount of beauty that lies neglected in a museum is appalling. Each little object lost in those acres of glass cases could give pleasure and instruction ; could, perhaps, cause to flower the germinal sense of the artistic, which is now killed in so many young people. For my own part, I am convinced that in London, for example, more artistic inspiration is to be found in the

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little church of Saint Etheldreda, which not one visitor in a hundred sees, than in all the museums of the city.

That tiny church, buried, except for the few who know of its existence, in the masses of modern brick and stone of Holborn, seems always to me when I enter it—and I visit it whenever I am near—to typify all that has gone from the world. Eight hundred years old, never more than a humble chapel, but almost unique in that it has survived undamaged and unspoiled by such hideous tombs and “decorations” as destroy the English cathedrals—the most dreadful example is that of Gloucester, where the nave is absolutely ruined by the modern work—it is simple, unimportant, obscure—and perfect. Its painted windows are framed by the carven stone.¹ It was built when the instinct of beauty was yet in mankind.

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In this age of criticism, there seem to be few critics who realise one radical difference between the work of the past and that of to-day, not only in art,

¹ The interiors of all mediæval churches and cathedrals were designed primarily to lead up to the colour in them—the painted windows, the mosaics, the pictures and jewels and embroideries. In these days it is impossible for us to realise how glorious a scene a cathedral of the fourteenth century must have presented, with its groups of worshippers in quaint costumes, its priests in begemmed vestments, its dark stonework accentuating its blaze of ruby, vermeil, turquoise, purple, emerald, argent and gold:

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but in literature. The work of the past was simple, for the reason that it had no need to be anything else. Our work is elaborate, because elaboration is necessary if we would hide, or attempt to hide, our loss of the instinct of beauty. "If the sentiment must stand, twist it a little into an apophthegm, stick a flower into it, gild it with a costly expression," wrote Gray to Mason; and that is what we must be doing all the while, for we can no longer be spontaneous—the Pierian spring has dried up.

No book of the Renaissance was more "artificial" than the "*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*," and yet the language of the learned Venetian friar is absolutely simple. No poets are more "artificial" than Ronsard, Du Bellay, Charles of Orléans, Marot. Yet regard these lines by Marot :

" Au bon vieux temps un train d'amour regnoit,
Qui sans grand art et dons se demenoit,
Si qu'un bouquet donne d'amour profonde
S'estoit donne toute la terra ronde :
Car seulement au cueur on se prenoit."¹

Compare this, or anything of Chaucer's, anything of Spenser's even, with the poetry of to-day of which our critics speak the most highly. Perhaps to offer Francis Thompson as an example is unfair, as his work is so overloaded with decoration as to make the effort painfully apparent to any reader; but almost all our writers, of prose as well as of poetry, to a greater or less degree strain after the unusual in word

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or phrase, seek the bizarre, search for archaisms and neologies.

What does it all mean but degradation, that something which we once had we have lost ? Instead of being the heirs of the ages, we who live now are overtaken by darkness in the dawning of our days.

VI

PIONEERS IN THE ABYSS

A LCOHOL, opium, crime, frantic search for amusement, restless journeyings, ceaseless effort to obtain wealth in the vain hope that it will bring some vaguely imagined surcease of pain—is humanity to be blamed for these things? Should we not rather realise that it is the destiny of humanity to pass through this experience, to bury itself for a time in utter materialism? And considering the continual and omnipresent misery that is humanity's lot, should we not rather wonder that the record is no worse? For now, it is all misery. Philosophy is reproached for teaching us—when finally analysed—nothing. But the philosophy of to-day does teach us one thing, teaches it to us beyond the possibility of doubt. It is that life is evil.

Let us imagine a civilisation from which the old ideals and the old instincts have been taken away, a civilisation in which increased knowledge has reduced the hope of man to one object—to make himself as comfortable as may be. In such a civilisation there might remain the forms of religion, but none of its spirit. The inspiration for noble effort having gone, effort would be devoted to the obtaining of those

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things that we know the world can provide—in one word, wealth. Woman, being the weaker, would strain to make herself an object desirable, a reward of wealth : man would spend his life in gaining wealth, in order to obtain those things that wealth can give. The government of such a country would, essentially, be a government by those who had succeeded to the greatest degree in obtaining wealth. Those who were less fortunate would every now and then rebel ; but the rich men, having in their hands the machinery of government, whatever its forms might be, would usually succeed in deflecting the forces attacking them, and, even when defeated, would know how to minimise defeat by using some part of their wealth in order to attract to their side the leaders of the opposing forces. For money would be regarded as the only good, and even the battles between what would be called Right and what would be called Wrong would be, in reality, battles over money.

In such a civilisation would not the time of men be regarded as *a market for gain* ; would there not be *disorder in marriages, adultery, and shameless uncleanness* ; would not the *wives be foolish and the children wicked* ; and, in the end, would not all find that they were miserable, that their *hopes were vain, their labours unfruitful and their works unprofitable* ?

Can it be said that this is not a true picture of the American civilisation of the present time ? America leads in the movement into materialism : she leads in

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the knowledge of the material : all her triumphs are triumphs over matter—discoveries and inventions giving to man more power to use the forces of nature for his own safety, comfort, material profit. The golden thread that joins us to the divine has become, in America, even more attenuated than in the rest of the civilised world ; but everywhere a process is going on which, suggestively, is called “ Americanisation ” : everywhere those of us who love the old ideals, the fading glory, deplore this seeking of the apples of Sodom, this inevitable change ; and the surest indication that it is inevitable, and that it will be accelerated, is the fact that it is generally mistaken for progress.¹

Is it necessary to explain what this process is, what it means ? The word “ American,” throughout the world, has become a synonym for qualities which no other single word expresses, including one quality for which there is no other name at all. It indicates a combination of power to utilise potential sources of wealth and to realise any opportunity to obtain wealth ; egotism, vanity, irreverence for sacred and honoured things, and, beyond all, what is known (though wrongly) as “ vulgarity.” It is this last

¹ In a single number of *The New York Times* (10th November 1912), I find a page article by Dr Ching Chun-Wang in which he declares that “ the New China will be a new United States,” and another article in which Dr Jinzo Naruse, President of the Women’s University at Tokio, says that the Japanese women are “ growing like their American sisters.”

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quality which is peculiarly distinctive of the American civilisation. When a thing is new and unique, we can explain it only by giving examples of it.

In Worcester, Massachusetts, on Sunday, 29th September 1912, the Rev. C. F. Hill Crathern, pastor of the Park Congregational Church, announced that he had prepared a series of "Up-to-date Beatitudes." Some of them were as follows :—

Blessed are the early comers to the sanctuary, for they shall sit in the seats of the Saints.

Blessed are the men who accompany their wives to church, for they shall save them from the suspicion of being widows.

Blessed is the man who withholdeth not his hand from the weekly offerings but giveth liberally as unto the Lord. Surely he shall have enough and to spare.

Blessed are the singers in the sanctuary who can sing and will sing, for they shall never be sent to Sing Sing.

Blessed is the man whose speech is brief and interesting in the prayer meeting, for he shall be called upon to speak again.

Blessed are the church members who give our Lord and the minister as little trouble as possible, who are loyal to the church, regular in their attendance, generous in their gifts, gracious in their sympathies and honourable in all their ways. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward on earth and in heaven.

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It is difficult, indeed it is impossible, to find words with which to characterise such blasphemy as this, committed by a sworn minister of God. The most degraded savage, the head-hunter of Borneo or Formosa; the filthy Australian; the cannibal of Africa—none of these could be guilty of such an abomination. Does the reader think the Reverend Mr Crathern unique? By no means: he is a type, and even his terrible performance is surpassed in “prayers” by evangelistic ministers of which a collection was made by the Rev. Dr Washington Gladden and published by him in *The Independent*. One of these ministers, in a prayer regarding certain editors who had offended him, exclaimed: “They’re a bad lot, Lord Jesus, a bad lot. Let me give you a tip, Lord Jesus. If you go after those fellows you’d better put on your rubber gloves.”¹

After this the circumstances that “Lead, Kindly Light” was the title of a vaudeville sketch in New York and that an enterprising business man in a Middle

¹ It is natural that men capable of such blasphemies should also be capable of shocking hypocrisy. It is “reformers” of the stamp of these evangelical clergymen who organised the recent campaign in Chicago against Jack Johnson, the prize-fighter. Was there ever a more astounding piece of hypocrisy? White men encouraged this negro to be a splendid animal—and nothing more. They rewarded him lavishly for being a magnificent animal. And then they complain because the animal acts as such an animal, if it be healthy, always must act. The case of Maxim Gorky and his experiences in America was monstrous enough, but the case of Johnson is even more amazing;

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Western town organised a money-making tourist society providing cheap trips to Europe and called it the "Holy Grael League" seem comparatively innocuous. I mention them merely as indicative. A further example was provided by an American boy who, after being shown over Westminster Abbey, remarked: "Yes, it's swell; but you ought to see the First Congregational Church at Detroit."

These are instances of *Americanism* in its most obvious form. But it is a quality that is found in every class of American. I have not the privilege of knowing Dr E. Benjamin Andrews, but I believe that he is a most charming and cultivated gentleman. The following is from an article entitled "The Decline of Culture," by Dr Andrews in *The International Journal of Ethics* of October 1912 :—

"Our traffic in spirituals, never any too lively, has decreased. Our export of high-life wares used to be greater than now. At date, we fear, the balance of the trade is against us."

I do not know whether I have any right to criticise this, to say anything more than that it is objectionable—to me, and that no European of cultivation equal to that of Dr Andrews could possibly have written it—as yet. To me, it seems that this talk of "spirituals" and "high-life wares" cheapens, and vulgarises, and lowers the very things for which Dr Andrews is contending. His remark, of course, is

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meant to be semi-humorous. But is humour an excuse for making sacred things banal ? All Americans seem to think that it is.

Curious instances of the blindness to things obvious that always and everywhere exists are to be found in a great number of books and articles by Europeans about America and in Americans' writings about Europe and the attitude of Europeans. The people of the United States have often been grieved and astonished at the behaviour of distinguished visitors. They have visited America, have been received with much honour, have been entertained with all lavishness, have seen the towering buildings and gorgeous clubs of New York, the stockyards of Chicago, the steel works of Pittsburg, the miscellaneous architectural effects of Washington ; and then they have gone home to say things about America bitter, biting, sarcastic, and often untrue. Americans have not been able to understand it, and, in their turn, have had many caustic things to say about Europe in general and eminent Europeans in particular. But the explanation lies deeper than envy, or the lack of courtesy due from guest to host. These visitors from foreign lands cannot all be ill-bred clowns ; there must be some reason for their boorishness. The reason is to be found in instinctive, but usually unconscious, fear—fear of the tendencies exhibited, at present in their greatest degree, in the United States. Those who have not descended into the material quite so deeply

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as the Americans as a people have done, have an implicit dislike of what they find there. They are frightened by the intense, all-pervading, deadly materialism which is all that America has to show. Some little trace of nobler life is still to be found in Europe : the impulse is lost, but the memory of other days remains. And so, when a traveller of quick perception visits America he is often, without realising the cause, oppressed and overcome by a sentiment of antipathy, estrangement. It is all so perfectly organised ; the machine for the creation of wealth—at least so far as the stranger can see—runs so smoothly ; and it all results in such utter futility.

I spoke of the word *vulgarity* as being inadequate to express the peculiar American quality which has not yet been communicated in any great degree to the older world, but of which we can already find the first symptoms even in Japan. Vulgarity, in the ordinary sense, is and always has been ubiquitous. The Spanish peasant of Bilbao who has become a millionaire as a result of the extension of iron-working in that region is vulgar. He builds houses of an amazing eccentricity ; he throws his money away in all sorts of extraordinary prodigalities. And even he is surpassed in the love of childish display by the Indian prince, with his great jewels, his elephants decked with gold and precious stones, his army of retainers, his barbaric love of tangible wealth. And yet we hear little of the vulgarity of the Spanish *nouveau riche*, nothing about the vulgarity of the

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Hindu raja. The reason is that such displays as those of the Indians and Spaniards are recognised intuitively as being associated with a certain idealism : the display of the American is recognised as an object in itself.

A favourite argument of Americans in defence of their low standard in literature and the arts is that America is "a young country." It is an argument that is untenable. The American civilisation is just as old as the civilisation of those who constitute the American people. When an immigrant arrives after a journey from Liverpool, or Naples, or Copenhagen, he has not undergone any strange sea change on the way. For practical purposes the United States is very much nearer Europe than were the Greek colonies to Greece. And yet Sicily, the islands of the Archipelago, Asia Minor, the shore of the Black Sea, all became centres of culture very soon after the Greeks colonised them. Wonderful work was done in each of these colonies—wonderful work in art, in learning, architecture, poetry. The Greek carried his arts and crafts, his learning and his delicacy with him. And so we find, wrought for Dionysius of Syracuse, coins that no die-cutter of any succeeding century could even hope to rival. In Lesbos Sappho sang so marvellously that the few lines of hers that have come down to us seem instinct with a glory that is more than human. Even in the far-away colony on the Black Sea they produced work in marble, in gold

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and ivory, and in bronze that is valued to-day beyond anything that the modern, with all his training, can produce.

Why, if America be a "young country," should she not also be backward in science, invention, engineering, medicine—in the learning and the skill that increase man's power over material things? It takes as long to educate a biologist as to educate a poet, and a Goethals who can dig a Panama Canal where the greatest engineer of Europe failed, is, in his way, as rare a specimen of humanity as a Michelangelo. America has to make no apologies, to offer no stupid excuses, where progress in material things is concerned. Wilbur and Orville Wright, Edison, Bell, a dozen others, proclaim her the world's leader in these things. Then why offer foolish explanations, that do not explain, of America's backwardness in the things of the spirit? Is it not better to try to find a reason for this strange contrast?

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If there is one thing of which the American is certain, in regard to which he feels that there is no room for argument, it is that he is the busiest human being who has ever lived. He will, occasionally, admit that his ideals are not the highest, but he is convinced that his people are more energetic, accomplish more work than any who preceded them. I am afraid that he is deceiving himself. Can anyone in these days read of the exploits of the Italian humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries without feeling

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that they appear actually superhuman, compared with even the most energetic of ourselves ? We read of Filelfo at the age of seventy-seven, after a life full of amazing effort, of continual stress and strain, making a long journey to Rome, and there delivering a series of lectures on Cicero, quarrelling with the Pope's treasurer and then with the Pope—each quarrel giving rise to a long series of written vituperation in beautiful Latin and of atrocious indecency—then going to Milan and burying his third wife, and finally, as full as ever of zeal of scholarship and greed of praise, making his last journey and dying at Florence, aged eighty-three—from dysentery. We read of Guarino, who when nearly ninety years old was thus described by Timoteo Maffei : “ His memory is marvellous, and his habit of reading is so indefatigable that he scarcely takes the time to eat, to sleep, or to go abroad ; and yet his limbs and senses have the vigour of youth.” And Giovanni Aurispa, who died at the age of ninety, and Cristoforo Landino, Lorenzo de' Medici's tutor, who lived to be eighty, and many others—their days until the last were full of effort and achievement. Many of these humanists made repeated journeys to the East in search of manuscripts and works of art, and the hardships of a comparatively short journey in those days would seem to us unbearable.

Think of the career of such a man as Dr John Dee, who is one of the few figures of his time whose lives we are able to follow from day to day, thanks to their

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diaries. When he was fifty-six years old he and his enormous family and household began a journey which took them as far as Prague, and they were away from home for over six years. Dee's manifold activities, as revealed in his diaries and his books, are positively frightening to anyone to-day who takes the trouble to examine what has survived of his work.

Why, with all our increased knowledge of material things, are we mentally and physically inferior to the men of even four hundred years ago; seemingly much inferior to the men of Greece of over two thousand years ago? ¹ The world, according to our philosophers, has been improving continually: thought, without the idea of continual progress, has become almost an impossibility. Why, then, this retrogression? To-day, we cannot even think, as those of old thought, consistently, with the precision that comes from habitual concentration. A very few are able to concentrate their minds and their energies: the average man to-day has the habit of desultoriness ingrained from childhood, is absolutely unable to engage in concentrated thought. How could it be otherwise when even young children are encouraged to read the newspapers and when every newspaper is a temptation to mental dissipation?

¹ I think it was Dr Jowett who wrote that in his opinion the average Athenian of the days of Pericles was as much superior to the average Englishman of these times as the latter is superior to the Australian aborigine.

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How can we dare to claim progress in any direction, save in the one direction of increased material luxury? In regard for human life? Look at the statistics of fatal accidents in Europe and America in any recent year—accidents due in the majority of cases to callousness and carelessness. Is it in the universality of education that we show our improvement? Nobody will accuse Mr Frank Moss, one of the most eminent of American lawyers, of being an alarmist, and yet he tells us that the “gunmen” who killed the gambler, Herman Rosenthal, were “fair representatives of a large class which has been spawned by New York’s slums, corruption, greed, and shamelessness”; that he is appalled by the consideration of what New York will be when the present generation has grown up; that all the “gunmen” were graduates of public schools, which, instead of making good citizens of them had made them members of gangs; that in them during their boyhood had been implanted no ideals above the ideals of the criminal.

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It is a general claim of Americans that, despite everything, their country continues to offer the nearest approach in the world to that “greatest happiness of the greatest number” that was its early ideal. Where is this happiness to be found? Among the “fortunate,” whose insane struggles for pleasure, excitement, new sensations, whose extravagances and divorces, vulgarities and display have

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made them a byword in their own land and everywhere else? There is certainly little happiness among these people, many of whom are acutely neurasthenic, victims of alcohol and drugs, and most of whom are so restless that few of them can remain in one place for a month at a time. Neither can we find happiness among the middle classes in the cities, who must pay, as a result of the extortions made possible by the American economic system, two or three times the value of everything they buy and whose lives lack the suavities of the poorest European town. As for the condition of the lower classes in America, the continual testimony of the American Press is sufficiently eloquent. If we would seek "happiness" anywhere in the United States, our best chance of finding it would be in the farms of the Middle West, the orange groves of California, the apple orchards of Oregon.

Throughout the world, those who live near Nature are generally regarded as being the least unhappy. Whether this class in America is in a more enviable situation than it is elsewhere is more than doubtful. We have to judge the success or failure of the American civilisation by the condition of the millions who live in the towns, and judged by this standard the American civilisation is a failure.

VII

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WHAT is the explanation of the strange position of woman in America, where, to a large extent, she has become decorative, an inferior creature, a parasite who glories in her dependence and at the same time cries for the privileges that are man's ?

In his ferocious essay "On Women," Schopenhauer declares that "in Europe the 'lady,' strictly so-called, is a being who should not exist at all." But let us consider what a "lady" was in the old days, before the disastrous tendencies of the present time had begun to manifest themselves. It is a charming picture that we see, a picture that I suppose we cannot help idealising a little, but for the essential reality of which we have very good authority,

Think of the lady, the mistress of the house, of, say, three hundred years ago. Cheerfully did she bear children, often many children. These children she educated, the girls until they became women, the boys until they went to school. In case of some mild ailment she was the family physician, learned in herbs and the times to gather them—juice of the white beet for headache, rosemary for the liver, the essence

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of marsh-mallows for a rough skin. She knew how to prepare ointments and plasters ; she understood the “Chymicall characters” ; she could make the “French Queen’s perfume,” rosewater, damask-water, sweet waters of many kinds—of balm, violets, woodbine, “water of dragons” for the ears, water of endive for fever. In her treasured, close-writ book, with its cover of gilt leather, or embroidery, or shagreen, she wrote my Lady Cromwell’s directions for distilling truly, the way to make Mrs Downing’s powder to stanch bleeding, recipes given by the Countess of Sussex, the Countess of Surrey, Lady Coventry, Lady Saville, many another noble mistress of a great house. In the same, or another book, she had time-honoured, well-proven cookery recipes, for dishes so elaborate that a *chef* of to-day would resign rather than attempt them ; dishes that took many hours to prepare, Gargantuan pastries, fricassees, lamprey pies, peacock pies, boars’ heads, “grand sallets,” “potage blanc de Lyon.” Nor was this all. In a “vertuous and regular house” of the early seventeenth century, such as Long Melford, as James Howell prettily described it in his “Epistolæ”—a great house “neatly kept,” with “orderly and punctuall attendance of servants,” gardens with rare flowers and “stately large walks, green and gravelly,” “orchards and choice fruits,” and, above all, with “a dainty race of children”—the lady of the house superintended the work of the gardeners, and some of the little flower gardens she tended herself.

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To a large extent, moreover, she and her maids provided the clothing for the family. "I would have you make Ned a suit of clothes," wrote Endymion Porter to his wife Olivia in a letter sent from Madrid on 7th June 1623. Ned was Endymion Porter's brother, at that time twenty years old, and Olive Porter had two children of her own to attend to and all the other cares of the household during her husband's long absence with the Prince of Wales at the Spanish Court! Yet we know that Endymion Porter was a gentleman of high position and of noble character, and that he and his wife loved each other dearly. They were rich. We read in their letters of large sums of money to be paid to the housewife at home, of "a jewel of diamonds worth some hundred pounds" sent to Olive by her husband, together with a box of perfumes, "tokens of my love." Soon afterwards came "a chain of gold of the prettiest making that ever I saw," and then a "little ruby ring" and "one hundred sixpences for counters to play at gleek." It is evident that, to the beautiful, stately woman in her lovely but simple dress, whom we see in Van Dyck's portrait, there was nothing unusual, incongruous with her degree, in a request that she set to work on a suit of clothes for her husband's grown-up brother.

But the housewife of old days was not only mother, doctor, cook, gardener, seamstress: to a great extent it was her busy fingers which made the house beautiful, filled it with quaint and exquisite needlework. We

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have all seen and loved and coveted the tapestries of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the embroideries of a later period, with their violets and lilies

“ ‘Mid the green grass, and the young flowers wonderful,
Golden and white and red and azure-eyed.”

One piece of such tapestry or embroidery was enough adornment, with its brilliant colours and its threads of gold, for an entire room.

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And now let us consider the American woman of to-day who corresponds in her degree to the Olive Porters of the seventeenth century. In some marble and gilded shrine—house, or hotel, or “apartment hotel”—where, if anywhere since the Fall, the primal curse has been overcome, where every desire is gratified, every material demand satisfied by pressing a button, we find the rich American woman. And she fits her tapestried, flower-bedecked surroundings. She has all the elegancies ; she is brilliant, piquant, alluring, tantalising. She has been everywhere, seen everything, from the Yellowstone Park to the Greek Theatre at Taormina, from the Golden Gate to the Taj Mahal. She seems always to have just arrived in town, or to be just about to depart. She has been presented at the European Courts, knows the celebrated men of the Old World and the New, has entertained prince and poets, prime ministers and Arctic travellers. Her conversation, “excellently beautiful with a plausible volubility,” is bewildering in its catholicity. She can discuss “New

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Thought " theories, with as much vivacity as when she talks about Italian hotels, the latest novel or play. A few of us, perhaps, would perceive, behind it all, a certain strangeness, but certainly not sufficiently evident to prevent us from wondering what Mr James Douglas could mean when he wrote that " the smart American woman is probably the most miserable creature in the world."

And yet, I believe, Mr Douglas was right. For all this soft luxury and beauty, all this elegance, this absolute of material well-being, delight for the senses, surrounds a creature who is an unnatural creature, whose entire life is defiant of that Law by which every human being who desires happiness must be ruled—the Law of Labour and of Service. The woman whose life is entirely selfish cannot be happy, because she has become unhuman, a monster, a creature for which Nature has no use. And these dainty, pretty, sparkling Americans, who refuse to bear children, whose entire lives are " an unquiet way of doing nothing," who do not cook, or sew, or make beautiful things, who shrink even from the responsibility of a household—these, who are women but in name, are in reality more wretched than any poor peasant wife, whose only release from toil is at childbirth, and at death. For these American women, the " gorgeous table " is indeed spread

" With the fair-seeming Sodom-fruit,
With stones that bear the shape of bread."

They have everything ; they have nothing—these



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daughters of gold. For them, many hundreds of thousands of men are working in the oil wells and steel mills of Pennsylvania, the lumber camps of Michigan, the mines of Montana, Colorado, New Mexico. Women and children are working for them in Georgia and Tennessee, poor peons in Florida, gangs of Swedes and Italians on new railways in many States. And the result of it all is gilded dust.

Mr Charles Dana Gibson is, by general agreement, not only one of the most brilliant contemporary masters of black-and-white drawing, but also one of the most characteristically "American" among living artists. It is unnecessary to describe his work ; we all have seen it ; we all know the "Gibson Girl"—that triumphant and splendid type of young womanhood, full of health and vigour, queenly proud. There is a "Gibson Man," too—the tall, beautifully dressed young man with dark eyes, carefully brushed straight hair, thin face (that of the cigar store Red Indian idealised), expression (when there is any) of humble worship of the "Gibson Girl." The "Gibson Man" does not impress us, because he is imaginary, unreal ; he is no truer to life than the wonderful creature, the good and industrious young merchant, who appears in coloured mezzotints of a hundred years ago—"The Pleasures of Love and Retirement," "Connubial Happiness," and the like. But the "Gibson Girl" is real. She is the portrait of many, the ideal of millions. Mr Gibson's drawings, which are

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perfect from the "process" engraver's point of view, are to be found, in reproductions, in thousands of households, from New York to San Francisco, Vermont to Louisiana. And probably the best known, the most popular Gibson series is that entitled "The Education of Mr Pipp."

Let us, after admiring the clear line, sure workmanship of these drawings—we will not go into the question of their value as works of art—examine them as documents, regard their significance. In almost every picture we find Mr Pipp, his wife, and their two daughters. Mr Pipp is an absurd little figure, a butt, a laughing-stock, a creature whose adventures and misadventures provide the farcical humour of the play. Mrs Pipp, stout, vulgar, frowsy despite her jewels and her expensive clothes, is hardly less grotesque. The two girls are beautiful, blooming, delightful; it is they who rule.

Why, to some of us, are these pictures not amusing, but terrible? Because they tell of a "civilisation" which is, in reality, barbarous in its contempt for age, its disregard of the old sacredness of the family, of the honour due to parenthood. These drawings are a satire bitter as any of Hogarth's. For they are true—deadly true.

If I were asked to describe, in a word, the evil that is destroying the American people, the misunderstanding of the proper relations between the sexes which brings with it misery, and decay, and death,

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I should use a word that is now common among the middle and lower classes of the United States—a sinister, poisonous, horrible word. The husband, the father, is spoken of as the *provider*. “My husband is a good provider,” a woman will say to another. “I wish my father was as good a provider as yours,” a girl will remark to a friend. I suppose it is true that hardly any word carries precisely the same significance to two persons, that its meaning depends on all sorts of memories, associations, that vary even as the experience and the reading of each of us varies. Nevertheless, surely this word “provider” must be loathsome to all of us, for it tells of the destruction of that upon which our civilisation is founded, the destruction of the old idea, and ideal, of the home. There can be no true home when the female members of the family regard the husband and father merely as a “provider,” a money-box, a machine of which the *raison d'être* is the gratification of their desires, a creature made for no other purpose than to work for them. And this is the fundamental evil in the relations of the sexes in America. The marriage state is not regarded as the result of a mutual agreement for love, and for service, and for labour, but as an arrangement by which the woman carries her wares to the best market she can find for them. It is a market in which the goods are overvalued ; in which, once the bargain is struck and the contract signed, the seller can demand payment and then refuse to carry out her part.

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Of the evils that result from the abnormal relations of the sexes in America only a brief reference is necessary. The appalling growth of divorce, the equally appalling decrease in the birth-rate, are known to every reader. "Race suicide" is not only disastrously prevalent, and increasing, but everywhere is naked, unashamed. Everywhere one finds entire window-fronts of chemists' shops filled with appliances for this crime.¹

I refer to this subject here only in order to controvert the argument and the excuse that the evils of which I have spoken are confined to the highest class. This, unhappily, is not the case, but even if it were the case the peril would be only a little less. There is no error more nearly universal than the belief that the conduct, the ideals of the dominating class of a community, a nation, are of little or no account so long as the "people" are virtuous, possessed of high ideals. This is an idea which a very little consideration should dispel, yet it is persistent. In reality, the dominating class is the expression of the nation; if it be enfeebled by what, in place of a better word, may be called corruption, the whole structure must be weak. The dominating class of a

¹ And when the women consent reluctantly to bear children, they refuse to nourish them. An investigation by the American Medical Association in 1912 showed that only twelve per cent. of American children were entirely breast-fed and that sixty-one per cent. received insufficient nourishment;

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State is not an accident ; it is an effect. This is true in regard to every people, but the connection (not the personal relations) between the upper and the lower classes is more intimate in a democracy than in a monarchy, the effect of the conduct of the one class upon the other more rapid. The ideals of Fifth Avenue, New York, of Ocean Avenue, Newport, must become soon the ideals of the farms of the Dakotas, the little towns of the Middle West. How can it be otherwise ? Fifth Avenue is the expression of the American people, of what it strives for, of what it makes of success.

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I have, proportionately at too great length, perhaps, dwelt on this question of the position of woman in America because it seems to me to be among the most obvious of the symptomatic characteristics of the American civilisation. Moreover, a comparison of the woman of to-day and the woman of the past goes far in support of the argument in a previous chapter in regard to the physical deterioration of civilised mankind of the present time. This process, of course, is not confined to women ; indeed, it would seem that in America woman has become physically superior to man : but both sexes have deteriorated.

There are many other symptoms, equally significant ; but it does not seem necessary to speak of them. That the people of America have descended into depths of materialism hitherto unsounded must,

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I think, be admitted ; and I think it is equally evident that in this descent they are leading the way for the rest of humanity.

How far have we to go ? Perhaps we are near the nadir : at least, let us hope so.

VIII

F E A R

IF one were asked to express, in a word, the characteristic emotion of this period, I do not think that the reply could be in doubt. The word would be "Fear." As man has sunk into matter, his fears have increased, until now he lives surrounded by fear, is ever obsessed by fear. It is part of our being : it is as impossible for us to escape from it as from our own thoughts. It poisons all our triumphs, is a wormwood that tinctures all our pleasures, enters into the softest perfumed delight.

A man accounted among the wisest of his time wrote that "men fear death as children fear the dark," and wrote a foolish thing. The simile is false. The child becomes used to the dark, and ceases to fear it. We do not get used to death : we do not know what it means. All we know is that, as Jeremy Taylor says, "We are condemned Persons, who are going to Execution, tho' by different ways, which we our selves know not."¹ On the subject of death more cant has

¹ It is strange that Pater preferred to quote Victor Hugo in expressing this idea. Mr Edward Carpenter also ignores Jeremy Taylor when he says that the study of the "art of dying" "seems to have been entirely neglected."

FEAR

probably been written than on any other. The "Departed out of this Wretched World to his Heavenly Kingdom" found on seventeenth-century tombstones is no more hypocritical than Haeckel's assertion that when the time comes man welcomes death as he welcomes sleep, lies down to die as naturally as he lies down to sleep. How many of us would fight against the desire for sleep if we knew that we could not wake ?

Those whom the world regards as the most fortunate, the most blessed and to be envied, are those who fear the most. The richer a man in love, in honour, in fame, in all that mankind regards as desirable, the more intensely does he fear. If he love, then he fears the loss of the one beloved. The father, his wife by his side, his children around him, can never forget the countless hazards of the existence that is ours, can never cease to ask of the mute future if what he loves will remain or be taken away. The rich man fears the loss of his riches ; the poor man is ever tormented by the fear that sooner or later his struggle against poverty will end in utter defeat. Is not the most pathetic jest ever made that of the Emperor Augustus about the debtor's pillow ?

Stimulants and narcotics are used because of the desire to escape, even for a moment, from fear. For the man who has lost fear is, for that moment, beyond a man. He whom alcohol or opium has enslaved lives in the hope of obtaining for himself those *moments*,

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when the consciousness is carried above that which ties it down. To the drunkard, the opium eater, nothing matters if he can but gain that momentary ecstasy, if his soul can for a while "desert the order to which it is compelled."

Other men obtain forgetfulness by work. All work, all activity that concentrates the human faculties on some object, however foolish, or mean, or pitiful, is actually a method of self-hypnotism. Here, indeed, is the true curse that has been passed upon us. We must work, for if we do not work, we die—not of physical starvation necessarily, but as a result of the operation of a terrible law. Some men, who are regarded as the fortunate of the world, are taught from childhood to make play their work, and so survive, because they are able to hypnotise themselves by play. Others achieve fortune and cease to work, and, being unable to hypnotise themselves by play, they die. A few after achieving fortune are able to turn avocation into vocation—to busy themselves with philanthropy, or the collection of pictures, coins, books ; or public life, or horse-racing. But for all the law is the same—they must forget, or they die.

There are other ways by which men attempt to escape fear. A man can abandon those things that are the causes of fear, including the love of life. This desire to be free—often, of course, unconscious—is the true explanation of monasticism, of the choice by so many at all times of an existence which seems to others purposeless and painful. The historians of

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to-day are puzzled by the immense numbers of such persons in periods when the religious instinct appeared not to be strong ; but surely the explanation is to be found in this desire for peace, for tranquillity of soul which the world cannot give. The monk gave up much ; but what he gained, or hoped to gain, in return was escape from the curse under which he saw all others groaning. With no possessions, he could not fear their loss : having forsworn human love, he did not tremble for wife or child. The struggle for worldly honour meant nothing to him, and life itself was of so little worth that its end could be contemplated with serenity.

And, with all our knowledge and our pride of progress, men fear more to-day than in times gone by. In that "disadvantage of time," as Sir Thomas Browne calls it, was the world indeed more full of terrors ? I think not. I believe that now, and here, with our vaunted ease of life, we are more apprehensive of evil, more anxious for the future, more abject in our alarms than the peasant of mediæval Sicily, familiar with rape and massacre, than the dweller in some mercenary-harried town during the Thirty Years' War, never knowing what a day might bring forth.

We are cowards in regard to everything. We fear old age, and try by every means to conceal it, even from ourselves. We fear pain so intensely that many of our women refuse to bear children. We fear discomfort ; we fear poverty to such an extent that we

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regard it as the greatest of disgraces. The only thing we fear to a less degree than those who lived in other days is Fear itself. We are not ashamed to be cowards, and to admit it. We form "Hundred Year" clubs, the object of which is only the attainment of old age. Our abjectness is naked. At Lakewood, in New Jersey, I heard a rich man describe to some admiring friends how, to be prepared for any occasion when he might be compelled to ride in a street car, he always carried a pair of gloves which had been treated with antiseptics, so that he might be protected against the germs on the straps and gates. This man had formerly been an officer in the American navy, and had fought bravely in the Civil War. But now he was rich—and afraid. I know another gentleman whose cigarette-holder takes almost as long to get ready, with its complicated layers of cotton wool, as does a hookah. He desires the pleasure of smoking, but fears the risk. One of the richest men in the United States takes a surgeon with him whenever he goes shooting. A friend of mine, whose name is famous in three continents, has never quite forgiven me for something I did while we were dining together at a restaurant in London. I took out of my pocket and showed to him a little seventeenth-century book on witchcraft that once belonged to the author of "John Inglesant." He became violently angry, and refused to finish his meal. I did not know the cause until a couple of days afterwards, when he told me I ought to be ashamed of myself—the book had

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been collecting disease germs for two and a half centuries.

And how we fear for our souls—our little twopenny souls ! We pay almost as much attention to variegated recipes for their salvation as to methods for preventing wrinkles and corpulence and grey hair. We have lost the comfortable certainty of our pious forefathers in the efficacy, each of his particular religion, to ensure eternal bliss for himself and eternal damnation for the followers of all other creeds, but our inability to believe has brought with it no peace of mind.

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After all, there is nothing so very dreadful that can happen to us in this life. There is a limitation to pain—any pain. Evelyn remarks with amazement that the galley slaves he saw seemed quite cheerful. Let it all come—sickness, poverty, blindness, torture, hanging or burning at the stake, if it must be so. If we have done the best we can, we ought to be able to stand it without grovelling.

IX

DIVINER OR DARKER DAYS?

THERE are things that we know ; there are other things, that we do not know, but can measure: there are still other things, that we can neither know nor measure. Neither by knowledge nor by measurement can we judge the amount of what is called happiness that is possessed by the mass of the people who live now, as compared with the happiness of the people of other times. It is nevertheless possible, I think, to collate certain facts that together help us to form an opinion.

Let us consider, as far as we are able to do so, what was the condition of the inhabitants of a fairly fortunate and prosperous city in Europe three or four hundred years ago. We have to be careful not to idealise the picture. We must remember that much of what we regard nowadays as necessity was lacking, let alone luxuries that we possess. But we must be careful, also, not to lay too much stress on these things. A luxury, to one who has never heard of it, does not exist ; his deprivation of it has no effect on his happiness, whereas, at a time such as the present, when there are innumerable luxuries which only a few can afford, the lack of them is a cause of unhappiness

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to the others—the great majority. Of course if we, with our knowledge of the luxuries of to-day, could be translated into the fifteenth century, we would be intensely miserable ; but the people of four hundred years ago, having never heard of bathrooms, having never imagined telephones, typewriters, railways, *Mauretianas*, wireless telegraphy, motor cars—priceless boon to suffering humanity—felt not the slightest need of them. Doubtless, four centuries from now, if the world continue, as seems likely, to learn more and more about the manipulation of matter, people will look with pity on ourselves, wondering how we could be “ happy ” with so many disabilities.

The recognition of this fact eliminates the argument that is so often used by those optimists who tell us how fortunate we are in comparison with the people of former times. We have to look in other directions for criteria to help us to obtain a true, or approximately true view. The material available is scanty enough, but perhaps not quite so scanty as some historians would lead us to suppose. Such volumes as the Diary of Albrecht Dürer, the Venetian archives, the Diaries of Dr John Dee, Fynes Moryson's record of his travels, Lithgow's “ Rare Adventures,” Coryat's delightful “ Crudities,” the Letters of Pietro della Valle—all these provide us, if read with care and sympathy, with one *picture* after another, with impressions of the life in the old days, individually slight, but collectively convincing.

I do not believe that anyone who has read at all

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widely among the more intimate of the writings of three and four hundred years ago could be found who would deny that they convey an idea of enthusiasm, sanity, interest in all that life has to offer, that we are now utterly unable to find among the "advanced" peoples. In order to explain what I believe to have been one of the reasons for the more joyous outlook on life in the sixteenth century as compared with the twentieth century—in all probability the principal reason—I am going to refer to what may seem a strange book to quote in this connection—Meredith Townsend's "Asia and Europe." In this book of essays—surely among the best informed and most interesting on Asiatic subjects ever written—there is a chapter headed "Will England Retain India?" In it Mr Townsend discusses some of the things that cause the native Indian to dislike British rule. Among these are the gradual decay of Indian art, culture, military spirit, architecture, and engineering; and the refusal of the authorities to permit the ancient right of private vengeance—the Indian of to-day is not even allowed to kill his wife for going astray! But chief among all the causes of discontent with British rule, according to Mr Townsend, is the total loss of the *interestingness* of life. He says: "It would be hard to explain to the average Englishman how interesting Indian life must have been before our advent; how completely open was every career to the bold, the enterprising, or the ambitious. The whole continent was open as a prize to the strong. Scores

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of sub-thrones were, so to speak, in the market. A herdsman built a monarchy in Baroda. A body-servant founded the dynasty of Scindiah. A corporal cut his way to the independent crown of Mysore. There were literally hundreds who founded principalities, thousands of their potential rivals, thousands more who succeeded a little less grandly, conquered estates, or became high officers under the new princes. Life was full of dramatic changes. The aspirant who pleased a great man rose to fortune at a bound. Even the timid had their chance, and, as Finance Ministers, farmers of taxes, controllers of religious establishments, found for themselves great places in the land. For all this which we have extinguished we offer nothing in return, nor can we offer anything."

"*We offer nothing in return, nor can we offer anything.*" It applies not only to present-day India, as compared to the India of the past, the India of romance, a land of fabulous riches, of jewels and spices, golden temples and perfumed palaces, a land of strange secrets, of despots of illimitable power, of philosophers whose learning transcended the knowledge of the Occident—it applies not only to India, but to all the modern world. The civilisation, the "progress" of to-day, gives us many things, but it has taken from us the one thing that made life *interesting*, and in taking that from us it has taken the savour from life.

There is another means of forming an opinion in

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regard to this question.¹ In Europe there are still a few places in which conditions similar to those that existed in the old days survive ; and we find that, the more “ old-fashioned ” a town is, the nearer are its inhabitants to a condition which, if not happiness, is something like contentment, something like that *ordered* life which the philosophers so greatly desire. I am not speaking of tourist-overrun places such as Nuremberg and Chester, but of communities in the backwaters and culs-de-sac of civilisation, communities such as a few in Friesland, Lecce and other towns in the “ Heel of Italy,” some of the Italian hill cities, Città Vecchia in Malta, and a very few places—Rothenburg, for example—in Bavaria.² In these the people live much as they lived three hundred years ago. The testimony in regard to their lives is unanimous ; they enjoy a placid happiness that is unknown elsewhere. A home in one of these towns is a nest which the family that occupies it has spent

¹ In this connection I am, of course, not speaking of the submerged. Nobody has ever taken them into consideration, and the Englishman or American of to-day is just as callous in regard to human suffering, when he is not brought face to face with it, as any Egyptian, Greek, or Roman slave-owner—probably more callous, for human life had a certain market value when slavery was an institution, while now what takes the place of the slave class is regarded merely as a nuisance. The writer and the (possible) reader of this are among the one in ten. The others never have counted ; do not count now. Why be hypocritical ?

² Ober-Ammergau no longer among them.

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hundreds of years in adorning, a house beloved and sacred, rich in ancient things, and always, even now, being enriched by the labour of the women of the family, learned in subtle handicrafts, in lace and embroidery, in drawn-thread work, in other quaint and beautiful arts. That the life in such a town as this is happier, or at any rate less unhappy, than the life in a modern city is not a matter to argue about ; it is evident to the most unobservant.

In England there are still a few centres of population that are "old-fashioned," in which the old manner of life survives. Such a place is Salisbury, and Mr W. H. Hudson in "A Shepherd's Life" has given us a charming picture of scenes there on market day. It is impossible to read the chapter on "Salisbury As I See It" and not to feel that these country people who are described on their weekly visits to the capital of the Plain, the "red town with the great spire," are happy in a sense which is well-nigh inconceivable to the Londoner, the New Yorker, the Chicagoan.

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As Salisbury is characteristic of the old, the vanishing, so is Canning Town characteristic of modern industrialism and all that it involves of misery, degradation, vice. It is a place inhabited almost entirely by the very poor ; tawdry, wretched, with slums of an unimaginable horror. I went there one Saturday evening in late summer, and I went because there was something strange to see in that quarter

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of the town. It seems that a quarrel between the brewers or public-house keepers (I forget which) had resulted in two public-houses reducing the price of beer from fourpence to threepence a quart. "It is an amazing scene," said the friend who advised me to go. It was amazing, but the adjective seems pitifully weak to describe what I saw. For not in the "Red Light" quarter of New York, not in the haunts of "Apaches" in Paris, or in the Santa Lucia district of Naples, no, not even in the terrible "Barbary Coast" of San Francisco, had I witnessed such utter, loathsome degradation. I have seen many horrors in my time, but not Messina after the earthquake, with the naked corpses being dug out by the hundred, was as terrible as this. It seemed that the entire population of Canning Town regarded it as their duty to drink all the beer possible while it was a penny cheaper than usual. Outside the two public-houses of which I have spoken there were great crowds—young men, old men and women, young women with babies at their breasts, little children, and all, yes, even the children (was it my fancy?) seemed to be cursed by *beer*, to carry on their faces the sigillum of beer, the bloated, unhealthy cheeks, the features with lost outlines, the drooping, horrid lips, bleared eyes.

The evidences of English national decay, national degradation, are, when one is impelled to regard them, overwhelming. Of the dry-rot that seems to have attacked the English people there are evidences everywhere. It is unnecessary to give instances. Every

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thoughtful Englishman, every observing traveller, knows that this is true. And yet we claim to be happier than our great-grandfathers.

“ *This* is progress,” said an American to me in the course of a voyage on the *Lusitania*. He waved an eloquent hand at the ship, with its thousand devices for comfort and speed and communication. I was shown through the *Lusitania*’s engine-rooms. “ *This* is progress,” I repeated to myself—and I wondered.

Is it progress ? And if it be progress why is it not accompanied by increased happiness ? I knew better than to argue the point with my American friend : I knew well what he would say if I were to speak of those quiet ancient places where there is so much more happiness than in the hustling cities of the New World. “ But what do they *do* ? ” he would have asked, and, from his point of view, the argument would have been unanswerable. Soon all the world will be as contemptuous of beauty, of the old ideals, of kingship, and reverence, and service as is America. Even now we find it almost impossible to understand the old relations between master and servant. “ We shall certainly have a great war,” wrote Sir Edmund Verney to his steward in 1642. “ Have a care of harvest, and God send us well to receive the blessing of a return thanks for it. I can say no more—your loving master.”

“ Your loving master ” ! Is there any country in the West where this form of expression remains ? I think

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not : I do not believe that even Spain or Montenegro is still sufficiently backward. In some lands master and servant retain a little of the old kindness, the old intimacy, but does love remain ?

And the artisans—can we with honesty persuade ourselves that their condition is better nowadays than in the fifteenth century ? They had trade unions in those days. In the *Mariiegola* of a typical *scuola* of Venice we read that the object of the guild (since Holy Writ teaches that it is “a good and pleasant thing to dwell together and to be humble in the love of God”) is that the members should “abide in the love of God and of His Holy Peace, to the glory and praise of the Omnipotent God and of the Blessed Mother, Ever-Virgin, Madonna S. Mary, and of the Blessed Messer S. Peter, martyr, and especially of Madonna S. Ursula, virgin, and all her Blessed company, virgins and glorious martyrs and all others His Saints.” These guilds were among the greatest patrons of the arts—it was for them that much of the finest work of the Renaissance painters was done. A festival of one or many of them was a sight full of colour, of gold, of gorgeousness, unknown, inconceivable in our day. But devotion remained the most important object with all of them—devotion and charitable works. The day before the election of the officers a solemn Mass was sung : a guild, however poor, would have deemed itself disgraced had it not its own chapel.

Charity among these ancient institutions was

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absurdly old-fashioned and unscientific. Chapter IV. of one *Mariiegola* ordains that if a member of the *scuola* fall sick, the *Gastaldo* or one of the other *boncali* shall visit him. If the patient be poor he shall be relieved from the funds of the Confraternity and by alms collected with that object. The wife of the *Gastaldo* is bound to visit the sick *sisters*. The brethren take turns to watch over the sick man, and the head of the order is bound to provide that a sufficient number of friars shall visit and comfort the invalid. If the sick man die he is to have the privilege of burial in the vaults of the *scuola*.

Are our labour unions an improvement on this ? Perhaps the use of dynamite, so widespread in America, is an indication of progress ; perhaps the breaking of solemn agreements that is a specialty of our English organisations shows how much more civilised we are than those foolish workers who spent their money on religion, and charity, and art. It was all so childish ! Grown men whose ambition it was, not to become Labour Members of Parliament or leaders of strike movements, but to have their portraits painted by Carpaccio among saints and martyrs joined together in prayer ! Unions which, instead of employing their power, and wealth, and energies in order to obtain less work and more pay for their members, vied with each other to acquire some much-desired sacred relic !

All that nonsense has been swept away, but it may still be questioned whether the simple and benighted

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Venetian craftsman was not happier than the trade unionist of our time, whose capacity for enthusiasm is exhausted in hatred and envy of his employers and of all those who are richer than himself.

There was, of course, a dark side to life in the old days. Famine and plague and war were perils which, although not so ever-imminent as the false perspective given by history suggests, were yet very often to be feared. Moreover, the pain that the average man or woman had to suffer in the course of a lifetime appals us when we think of it, as also does the torturing of accused persons. The callousness of such a man as John Evelyn, one of the noblest figures of his century, who in 1650, while on a visit to Paris, watched the torture of a malefactor, and described it as "uncomfortable," but as representing "the intollerable sufferings which our Blessed Saviour must needs undergo"—we simply cannot understand it. The hanging of children for thefts of a few pennies is equally incomprehensible to us, and even those of us who attend prize-fights profess horror at the idea of the Roman gladiatorial games. In the book by Mr W. H. Hudson to which I referred in this chapter there is a description of the sentencing early in the nineteenth century of a number of offenders to death or to transportation—a terrible picture of inhumanity, of a ferocious judge, and of punishments that now seem incredible.

It would be possible to make out a plausible case

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for the contention that in Europe and America there is now as much cruelty of man towards man as ever, that only its manner has changed. Against the hanging of children three hundred years ago we might put the slaughter that increases year after year owing to the selfishness of motor car drivers. We might refer to the burning of negroes in the Southern United States, lynchings now so frequent that the newspapers in the North hardly refer to them unless they are made notable by some peculiarly atrocious circumstance. We might speak of the revelations of terrible cruelties in prisons and asylums, of the tiny children in America who, by the hundred thousand, live lives of toil more dreadful than if they were recognised by the law as being slaves.

But all this would to some extent come under the category of special pleading. In spite of the inhumanity that now exists, we know that the Western world has become more humane, if not in regard to life, at any rate in regard to pain. It is all that we have to show in the way of moral progress, and we may as well make the most of it.

The strange thing about it is that man is made no whit happier or more miserable by the sense of safety or the sense of peril. Mr Meredith Townsend, in the remarkable chapter from which I have already quoted, reminds us that the old India was full of violence, that private war was universal, that the danger from invasion, insurrection and mutiny never ended. "I

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question, however," he says, "if these circumstances were even considered drawbacks. They were not so considered by the upper classes of Europe in the Middle Ages, and those upper classes were not tranquillised, like their rivals in India, by a sincere belief in fate. I do not find that Texans hate the wild life of Texas, or that Spanish-speaking Americans think the personal security which the dominance of the English-speaking Americans would assure to them is any compensation for loss of independence. I firmly believe that to the immense majority of the active classes of India the old time was a happy time ; that they dislike our rule as much for the leaden order it produces as for its foreign character ; and that they would welcome a return of the old disorders if they brought back with them the old vividness and, so to speak, romance of life."

The truth of the matter seems to be that what we call happiness depends almost entirely on one factor—our power to *express* ourselves. Judged by this standard, we who live to-day are unhappier than the people of any previous period in the history of the world of which we have any knowledge.

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And so we return to the question with which this volume opened, and I think I have shown that, so far from having progressed, in anything but knowledge of the manipulation of matter, our condition has become continually worse. "The present situation," says Mr Chesterton, "is hell become comic."

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It takes a Chesterton to find the humour in such conditions as now exist, and we are fortunate in having two or three writers who refuse to take things seriously. To the rest of us, there is no humour in this hell. We are suffering from our degradation, suffering terribly, and when we turn to our teachers, priests, philosophers for comfort, they have none to give us.

How is it all to end ? Are we to sink lower and lower until the whole world is a great Pittsburg, and even many-fountained Ida is a reservoir and Fuji-Yama a power-house ? Perhaps ; but if I had believed that this was to be the last condition of mankind, that the mysteries which God allows to cloud His world were to remain as dark as they now seem, this would not have been written. It is written because I believe we are approaching the ultimate of degradation to which we have to sink and that thereafter we shall regain what we have lost. It is written because I believe that we may hope.

PART II

I

“AGAIN TO SEE THE STARS”

IN one of the most curious books ever written, the “*Liber Mysteriorum*” of Dr John Dee, in which he gives a full account of his “actions”—or séances, as we should call them now—with Barnabas Saul and afterwards with Edward Kelley, one of the “angels” with whom Dee thought that he conversed declares that the wicked “tie the power and majesty of God and His omnipotence to the tail or end of reason, to be haled as she will.” It is a suggestive sentence, and it really makes no difference to its value whether it was enunciated by one of Dee’s questionable angels or whether it came from his own “higher consciousness”—whatever that may mean. That the tendency of all modern science is to tie the power and majesty of God to the tail of reason is indisputable. And with what a result ! For science, in seeking to explain the universe, to illuminate it by its farthing candle of knowledge, comes near to denying the existence of anything divine, of anything beyond the material.

We have seen in the first part of this book that the history of mankind, as far as we know it, instead of supporting the opinions of science, would seem to

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refute them. Suppose, instead of consulting the Occidental professed scientists, we go to those who believe that they have gained illumination, not through the mind, but through the soul—to the poets, the mystics, the prophets and saints. Their testimony is well-nigh of one accord : it is that the soul has come from God, and is on its journey back to God, and is fighting its way to God through matter.

“ And Jesus said : ‘ Behold, O Father,
The striving with evil things upon earth,
How it wandereth wide from thy spirit,
And seeketh to flee from the bitter Chaos,
And knoweth not how it may pass through.’ ”

This is from a Gnostic hymn given by Hippolytus. And what does Iamblichus say ? That the soul desires to fall for ever, to rend herself from God for ever, but cannot do so. Apollonius of Tyana tells how man remembers his divinity, and Swedenborg speaks of “ men in their highest state of excellence, before the Flood,” adding that in time they became sensual.

The poets tell us the same thing. Most of us know that exquisite passage in “ Atalanta in Calydon ” describing how the high gods made the spirit of man :

“ They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life ;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein.
: : : : :
His speech is a burning fire ;
With his lips he travaileth ;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death.”

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And George Meredith :

“ More gardens will they win than any lost ;
The vile plucked out of them, the unlovely slain.
Not forfeiting the beast with which they are crossed,
To stature of the Gods will they attain;
They shall uplift their Earth to meet her Lord,
Themselves the attuning chord ! ”

The Oriental poet-mystics speak continually of this return to God. “ For the grave is a curtain hiding the communion of Paradise. After beholding descent, consider resurrection,” wrote Shamsi Tabriz, and the Sufis, believing that the existence of the soul was pre-natal, also believed that the appreciation of earthly beauty was due to memory of heavenly beauty. The “ Masnavi ” of Jalálu'd-Dín Rûmí is full of clair-voyant verses, but none seems to me more inspired than this :

“ If spiritual manifestations had been sufficient,
The creation of the world had been needless and vain.”¹

Many volumes could be filled with quotations from the poets and seers showing that they agree on what it is not a misnomer to call a system of philosophy. Avicenna has a very beautiful and suggestive passage in his poem on the Soul, describing it as weeping when, earth-bound, it thinks of its home, and in early Chinese poetry we find the same idea, while among

¹ For many of the references in this book to Oriental poetry I am indebted to the excellent “ Wisdom of the East ” series.

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English poets Blake is mentioned in this connection only because he spoke more frequently than others of the soul's descent.¹

Is it absurd to suggest that the poets know more of the mystery of life than all our scientists ? But even they do not explain the spiritual metabolism of which so many signs are apparent. For that explanation we must go elsewhere.

Five years ago, in Alameda, California, I found myself with a couple of hours to spare, and went into the little Carnegie library there. In California, among other charming and unusual customs, they are used to give the freedom of a public library to any visitor—he wanders at will and consults whatever books he chooses. I examined many rows of volumes, and at length came to the section devoted to Oriental philosophy. Here I discovered a little book, very badly printed in Calcutta about the year 1820, written by some old Hindu swami, which contained a chapter in which I found the desired euphrasy, in which, as I believe, the wisdom of the ages, the wisdom of which the Gnostics had a little, the wisdom that Paracelsus went to India to learn, was summed up. The swami began by presenting the figure of a circle. Mankind, he said, in describing his use of this figure, descended from the spiritual into the material,

¹ That is a curious phrase of Swinburne's about " Vague pre-Adamite giants symbolic of more than we can safely define or conceive," in his essay on Blake;

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and returned to the spiritual, carrying back with him the experience that matter gave—the experience that he was created, or created himself, to obtain.

According to this teaching—and this is the important point—mankind has nearly reached the nadir, has nearly arrived at the bottom of the circle, the ultimate of materialism. In a little while man will begin to crawl up the ascending arc, to regain that spirituality which he has lost in his descent into matter. In a word, the story of mankind shows a centrifugal and a centripetal force. It would appear that the centrifugal influence is not yet quite exhausted ; but, if we accept the testimony of the wise men of the East, we have nearly reached—as time is measured in the life of a world—the turning point of the circle.

In passing I may say that this old Indian teacher presented in his book one of the most astonishingly accurate prophecies that I have ever seen recorded, stranger than Nostradamus, stranger even than that prediction of the Plague and of the Fire of London that was published in 1651 by William Lilly. The swami outlined virtually the entire history of the nineteenth century. He used generalisations, but these generalisations covered the important events in thought and in government that characterised the period. This, however, is not important. The value of what he wrote lies in the light that it throws on the history of mankind and its destiny. Surely, if the acceptance of a theory depends upon the number

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of problems it solves, the perplexities it clears up, the seeming inconsistencies that it harmonises, then this theory has more claim to general acceptance than any theory that Science has put forward. For, if it be true, what should we expect to find ? We should expect to find that the world, so far as we can know its history, has continued to gain in material knowledge and to lose in spiritual knowledge. And this is what has taken place. The world to-day, compared with the world of four thousand, three thousand, yes, and even three hundred years ago, is seen to have lost in the arts, in the instinct toward beauty, in the instinct toward spirituality, in the knowledge of God, and to have progressed to an enormous degree in its inquiry into matter and the potentialities of matter, and in its ability to manipulate matter to its own advantage.

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The desire of the soul is ever to become richer, to enrich itself with manifold experiences and manifold delights. The meaning of this centrifugal and centripetal force, now attracting the soul into matter, now beckoning it back to its ancient home, we cannot know : it is among the supreme mysteries of our life. But that the soul of man is thus impelled we do know—the experience of every man bears witness to it—and I think I have shown that the centripetal power has grown less as the centrifugal power has grown stronger.

In some way, at some time—let us hope it will be

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soon ; let us hope that the wheel has almost come half circle—the turning point will be reached, and man, having sounded the uttermost depth to which he is fated to descend, will again begin to ascend to That from which he came. Is our arrival at that point in our development to be attended by terrible disturbances, by wars and revolutions and catastrophes, by that “ fiery trial ” of which we read in the *Didache* and in many other mystical writings ? There are signs in these times that some such period of terror is approaching. We can only pray that it will not come, and that if the terror come it will be brief. It is all part of the mystery of the “ cry wrought in the stillness of God.”

Of all strange things in this world of to-day, surely the strangest is this—that our learned men, after infinite pains of investigation, have discovered that the essence of all religions is the same, and yet not one suggests that this essence may be the truth, the truth that we all seek. It meets us at every turn of inquiry—this truth. It is in the Bible, the Upanishads, the Book of the Dead, in the writings of the seers of all peoples and of all times, in the Avesta as in the Tao, in the Book of Changes as in the Apocalypse. It explains and clarifies and harmonises, and it gives us hope. It shows us the meaning of our intense desire for life, our intense weariness of life ; our instinct to expend life and to conserve life. It shows us why man, alone among created things, must refrain in order to

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become refined and made nearer to the image of God. It shows how the human soul is a thing apart ; that, however man's body may have been made, or evolved, man, into whom was breathed the breath of life, is divine, has descended and can reascend ; that the soul of every human being is a part of the eternal Soul, that man, now a little lower than the angels, is able and is destined to raise himself to their degree, and above their degree. It explains the "sublime discontent of earth," to use the words of a wise man whose wisdom is not yet recognised : it shows us why those who feel the most keenly are often those who are tempted to excite or to still the soul by artificial means.

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In what manner and in what form the change came and the Soul was breathed into mankind, we cannot know. But that such a change did come all tradition, all religion, all the little that we know of human history indicate.

And more than this, all religions and all traditions indicate that mankind at some remote time had teachers who were of a different order from those they taught. Kingship shows it, the institution of the priesthood shows it, all the old stories of mankind tell of it. Kings, said that strange book of which I have spoken, would be hurled from their thrones, and the world would be without kingship. The institution of priesthood would also disappear, together with reverence for holy things. But this period of anarchy

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and chaos, this “ Age of Iron,” would not last for long, and men would again obey their kings and reverence their priests.

That there have been evil kings and wicked priests we all know, but royalty and religion are nevertheless needed by mankind. “ After the great Lord who has passed from the floating world, I would go, following his holy shadow,” wrote General Nogi, just before he ended his life, unwilling to stay after his emperor was dead. The Occident wondered at Nogi’s act, and though it could not understand it, manifested an instinctive impression that it was something noble, something worthy of praise.

In a few years, if the signs point aright, loyalty will have disappeared from Japan, as from the rest of the world. But the ultimate outpost cannot be far away, and our dream of the blossoming of good will then begin to be realised.

II

LEADERS OUT OF THE ABYSS

AMID the cruelties and chaos of America, the greed, selfishness, dishonesty, revelations of corruption in high places and in low, vanities and madness of the rich, anger and revolt of the poor—amid all this there can yet be heard—faint it may be, very weak, but always insistent—a note that sweetens and inspires. In America there is hope.

Struggle and disillusion, materialism unashamed, destruction of the old ideals and the old suavities, degradation of woman into a pathetically selfish parasite—these things we find in America. But hope has never been lost there. That note, dominant in the ears of the immigrant as he nears the Statue of Liberty, becomes dulled, but never wholly dies.

What the future, even the near future, may bring in America, none can tell. Fierce combats between the rich and the poor who produce their riches, panic and ruin and riot, even revolution and anarchy, are predicted by many observers. Yet through it all, if the signs of these times do not lie, hope in the future will remain.

This looking forward, this confidence in the dawning of a new day, is the best that America has to give.

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Millions of emigrants to America have been impelled by the need of bread, but other millions have gone there because, unconsciously in most cases, they sought a land of promise, a land of ideals, of faith in the destiny of humanity. Disappointment has awaited them, but it does not affect the result. They, and their children, and their children's children are the people of America, and hope has not been lost.

It is in California, I think, that the first faint signs of a new spirit, a new order, are the most clear. California is not part of the "West" in anything but geographical position. The traveller passes through the "West" to reach California, and most travellers are glad enough to leave it behind, with its crudities, its brutalities, its discomforts, its lack of all those things which, for an educated human being, make up the necessities and interests of life. I know of no impression in travel quite equal to that which is obtained on entering California by the usual "overland" route. Three days have been passed in getting over the dreary prairies and the drearier desert: the Rockies have been crossed so high up that all idea of height and grandeur is lost. The train has crawled painfully up the bleak Sierras, and, on reaching the summit, has passed through one snowshed after another, some of them many miles long. And then, all at once it seems, so quickly is the descent made, we drop into that lovely country of sunshine, of palms, and orange groves, of vineyards and flowers.

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The sense of aloofness, of a country apart, increases the longer one stays in California. On the surface there is not much difference between the Californians and the Americans of the East, the Middle West, and the West. It is only when we learn to know the people of California that we realise a strangeness, a seeking for new and nobler ideals.

It is there, in that enchanted land—the Greece of America, Mr Roosevelt has called it—that, I believe, the first signs of the change, the ascent of man out of the pit into which he has descended, will appear. Indeed, it may be that to some clear seers faint signs that man is approaching the nadir, is soon to reach his ultimate of degradation, and then to turn his eyes again to the Light, are already apparent.

On a moonlit night in the Mediterranean, at Syracuse or Taormina, at Valletta, or in Cyprus or in Capri, those of us who love beauty and the story of mankind think of the past, of its lost glories, its triumphs and its tragedies. With the dark sea before us, framed in vine leaves or carved marble, we think of the splendours of old art that are buried beneath the waves that now beat so softly on the shore, of the battles of old time that were fought upon that sea and shore, the agony of the Athenians, the murder of the great mathematician, Sappho's death for love, Empedocles' supreme sacrifice for knowledge. And as we think of these things we feel a passionate regret for all the beauty that the world has lost, and sea and

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mountain, sky and flowers become tragic to us, sweetly bitter, and the waves at sunset seem reddened with the blood of heroes who died long ago, the flowers seem to tell of passions of men and women of the vanished past.

In California there is the same glory of sunlit sea and mountain, of azure and pearl, emerald and gold. As in Sicily, there are orange groves in which the fruit hangs like flame against its background of olive, lemon orchards where the fruit is as stars in a night-sky of darkest green. And everywhere there are flowers—all the flowers of the world brought together; roses so abundant that they are used by the million at rose festivals; flowers that, unknown in Eastern America, grow as weeds in the streets; the flowers of old England, of Italy, and Greece; strange flowers from the Orient; scarlet and purple flowers from Australasia.

Besides her beauty and her perfect climate, California has romance. The Spaniards have gone, but they left behind them legends and traditions, beautiful names for mountains and bays and towns, and the "Mission" style of architecture, which the architects of to-day are adapting to modern requirements. Those picturesque old missions of adobe, dotted all over the country, from Monterey to San Diego, have inspired many a poem and painting, and have, indeed, provided a keynote for the art of the Californians. Consider, also, the influences of names. Would San Francisco have been the same had it been

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called "Smithville"? Would Santa Barbara be so delightful were it known as "Jonestown-by-the-Sea"? Then, again, San Francisco is a gateway to the Orient, and, just as the arts of Venice were coloured and glorified by the city's traffic with Persia and India, so the arts of California are impressed by some note of dreamy gorgeousness that has come from the Far East. One finds it in the poetry of George Sterling, in the paintings of Dickman and Wores, in the remarkable embroidery and jewellery and metal-work that two or three San Francisco women are producing. In music the work being done in California is influenced from a strange source. I wonder how many Europeans know anything of the music of the Hawaiians—those haunting, exquisite melodies that seem like the farewell of a dying race.

But it is not the past of which one thinks in California; it is of the future, that future dreamed of by a Californian poet, when the vision shall be fulfilled, the vision that we who now "watch and wait shall never see." The setting is there, a land as lovely as mankind has ever seen, and there, I believe, will be born the new hope which all the world awaits, the new hope that will be the old ideals transfigured and made clear.

Many have written and are writing fanciful stories of the future, but it seems to me that the Bellamys, the Morrises, the Wellses must be far from the truth.

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Let us hope so, at any rate so far as Mr Wells's nightmares are concerned. The sign that man has passed his ultimate degradation, is turning his face again to the light, will, I believe, come in the form of a development of latent faculties that exist in human beings and the perfecting of the senses that we now employ. We eat pleasant food, we avoid unpleasant odours, to escape pain we make any sacrifice ; but to ugly sights and hideous sounds we are less sensitive than were the people of three hundred years ago, far less sensitive than were the Greeks and the Egyptians. And, if I have been able to prove anything in this book, it is that this deadening of our noblest instincts, this atrophy of the senses in us that—for the last few thousand years at any rate—has been for most of us our directest link with the Divine, is a process that has been continually going on, until now it is apparent to all who compare the present with the past.

And why do I believe that it is beyond the Sierras that man will begin to regain that which he has lost, holding at the same time to that which he has gained ? Why should it not be in India, that has never descended as far as the Occident into materialism ? Why not in Japan, whose people, despite the deadly effects on them of the Western "civilisation," still love beauty more passionately than do any other people in the world ? Why not in China, where the ancient virtues still remain, and where a great awakening seems now to be in progress ?

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For just these reasons. America has led mankind into what, let us hope, is the lowest degradation that we must touch. The rest of the world is following America into the depths. Elsewhere I have pointed out the signs of these days in the Orient, signs that seem only too plain. Recent events in China, India, Japan—the *débâcle* in the Middle Kingdom, anarchism in India, increasing evidence that the Japanese are beginning to lose the loyalty to their emperor which was the strength of the nation—all show that the disease which its victims regard as progress must run its course. In America democracy has been tried, and has been found wanting. On the Pacific coast of America, I believe, there can be discerned the first indications of a coming reaction, auguries of a future when priesthood and kingship will again be revered, because their meaning will again be understood, the eternal powers that they typify recognised once more ; when “gouvernance will again be in virtue, not in beauty or costly apparel.” Over all America to-day there is unrest, a straining against the present order, a vague yet profound hatred of the brazen image that the nation has been worshipping, an almost hysterical searching for other and nobler ways. This dissatisfaction, this unrest, are more evident in California than in any other part of the United States.

But it is hardly this impatience, this disgust with the sordid and degraded god to whom they have been sacrificing that is the most significant characteristic

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of the new civilisation of the Californians. It is, rather, a sense of mystery, of colour and wonder, of the magic of old and glorious dreams. To endeavour to give expression to an idea that, in the mind of the writer, is but a formless idea, an intuition, is a vain task. I know of no better way to suggest my meaning than the making of a comparison. We cannot possibly imagine New York or Chicago as containing a Rucellai Garden in which eager scholars discuss the latest treasure of written word or carven marble recovered from the magical past, or a Bamboo Grove such as that in which the Seven Sages were witty, and merry, and wise. But it is easy to picture California as a land of temples and marble shrines, the scene of a true and splendid renaissance; Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo adorned with many-pillared buildings, the great trees of the Bohemians' summer glades sheltering a company of scholars and poets such as that which gathered beneath the olives and saw in the city below, as they talked of things beautiful and ancient and strange, Giotto's pearl tower; the baptistery, *il mio bel San Giovanni*, that was there in Dante's day; the cathedral with its noble dome.

All literature of which we have knowledge is tintured, and often dominated, by the thought of death: a great deal of Western literature has also been dominated by the thought of the past, a past when mankind was nobler, happier, nearer to God. The motto, "Remember upon Dethe," that we find

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on so many Elizabethan and Jacobean rings is no commoner than the wistful longing for the *Bella età de l'oro* of which Tasso sang in his divine Ode. Even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, full as they were of vigour, of great achievement, men's thoughts were never far from the fate that overtakes all living things, from the contemplation of former times and of lost and glorious arts. It was not only the divines, with their continual cry that "Life cannot be good, unless it must resemble Death": we find the sense of the imminence of death in the work of all the thinkers of that time, as it has dominated almost all Occidental thought since the earliest times of which we have any record.

When man's thoughts turn from the past to the future, when man has overcome the fear of death, when he knows instead of guessing and theorising—when that time comes, humanity will have reached the turning point.

III

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IN the road "Ta Maimuna," between Xeukia and Sannat in Malta, there was found an Arabic inscription in Cufic characters of the year 1173. It came from the tomb of "the daughter of Hasan, the son of Ali El-Hud, the son of Maiz es-Susi."

"Oh thou who beholdest the tomb," is written, "know that I lie like a bride : my eyelashes and the angles of my eyes are covered with dust in this place of slumber.

"The state of probation ended, in the hour of my resurrection the Creator will restore me to life : I shall again see my kindred, and be full of joy, and be happy in receiving the reward.

"Is there a man permanent on the earth, or a man who has repelled death from him, or who has seen it?"

This was the ancient attitude towards death. That supreme mystery, compared to which other problems and perplexities are of little account, was regarded with a dignity and tranquillity, almost with a cheerfulness, that some of us may try to imitate now, but that we have to strain our nerves and grit our teeth to obtain.

In the little museum at Syracuse — a museum

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containing treasures of ancient art unaccountably neglected by Baedeker and his tourist train—there is a bas-relief from the tomb of a child, showing the lovely little boy smiling, full of life.¹ Compare such a tomb as this with the tombs of our time, with their gloomy images, their half-expressed despair. The truth is that the mystery of death, more darkly esoteric to us now than it was when the Pharaohs reigned, is treated by us with more hypocrisy, has given rise to more self-hypnotism, than any other of the questions that confuse humanity.

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All our fear of death is due to our fear that with it will come a condition in which, whether we be conscious or unconscious, it will no longer be possible for us to express ourselves. For to live, and all the attraction of living, means to us, whether we realise it or not, the power of self-expression, to say: "This is *I*: I have done *this*."

That is to say, the microcosm is as the macrocosm. I have shown the story of humanity as demonstrating a continual descent into matter, accompanied by increasing curiosity as to matter and (necessarily) mastery over it. And, as humanity exhibits this desire

¹ I had this photographed, together with a statue of Dionysus that, it seems to me, is a masterpiece of Hellenic art which, if our alleged experts had known anything, ought long ago to have been recognised. Yet the director of the museum informed me that neither had ever been photographed before.

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to live intensely, so does the individual human being : it is his strongest instinct. There are those who "leave to others all boons of life," though there are very few in these days, but even they desire to live and to express something in what they do or what they are. As the expression of civilisations, of nations, has become more and more material, more and more ignoble, so has the expression of the individual ; until now the "successful " man, the man who has expressed himself in the highest degree, so far as the opinion of his fellows is concerned, is he who has become rich.

And, the further we sink into matter, into life on the material plane, the more precious, naturally, does life become to us. And so we find to-day that the peoples who are the least advanced into materialism, who are the most spiritual and artistic, are the peoples who hold life most cheap. The insouciance of the view of death of the Hindu and the Japanese shocks and horrifies the Occidental. It is something he is unable to understand, and of course he regards it as a symptom of the barbarism of the Oriental. But, actually, we cling to life because we have lost all true belief in anything beyond the present phase of life. We speak of the "sacredness " of human life : it is the only thing we still hold sacred.

One of the most terrible pictures in literature is that by James Thomson of the degraded and shameful creature who seeks the thread which shall guide

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him back to the days of his childhood, "love-cherished and secure." As the human race looks back, has always looked back, to that Golden Age which, in its collective consciousness, it has never forgotten, so does the individual, far sunk in the misery of matter, look back to the innocence and calm of the time of infancy. And as the race becomes more vile, so does the individual as he grows older become more and more entangled in the myriad meshes of the world : but ever does his childhood stay in his mind as a time of magic and of sweetness.

And the human being in mid-life, as he thinks of days gone by, also thinks of what is to come. A man of forty who does not think much of death is either an animal or a philosopher. Every man who is not sufficiently bestial to do without thought or sufficiently philosophic to deceive himself into the belief that he is superior to anxiety regarding what death means to him, every normal thoughtful man asks what it all means. And none replies.

Of the philosophers, Schopenhauer is the least obscure ; but even he writes with his tongue in his cheek, and evades the real question. And the poets—they see many things clearly, but not this. They may sing of golden hopes that flower and immortal fruits that bloom, but they leave the riddle unread. And the Eastern sages fail us here. Yumu, when he replies to the question of Nuchiketa on this subject, "Even gods have doubted and disputed about it : Ask, O Nuchiketa ! another favour instead of this,"

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expresses the position taken by Buddhistic and Vedantist thought.

Some go for enlightenment to the Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research. That these researches are of very great importance, that the neglect of them by the "regular" scientists is inexcusable, I should be the last to deny; but the serious students of the phenomena of séances will, I think, admit that the results so far obtained—wonderful, inexplicable as they are—do not really answer the question we all ask. Why, without exception, the *banality* (it is the only word that one can use) of the communications that have been made through mediums? The messages that Dr Dee's "angels" gave through Edward Kelley were infinitely superior in thought, in expression, in nobility of sentiment to anything that has come from nineteenth and twentieth century séance rooms. Indeed, Dee conducted experiments which, on the whole, were the most important of their kind in modern times, and it is amazing that the results he obtained are not more frequently referred to. Yet even here, the end of all is but increased perplexity. We cannot doubt Dee's honesty; we cannot doubt Kelley's mediumistic powers: the evidence of the genuine character of the phenomena is overwhelming. And yet, in view of what finally happened, we find ourselves more baffled than ever, inclined to regard as diabolic rather than angelic these psychic projections that at first were so delightful.

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But such experiments are valuable. Dee's commerce with his "angels" and Mrs Piper's mediumistic manifestations at least tell us one thing—that man is envisaged and surrounded by intelligences that exist apart from matter. The alternative theory of the subliminal consciousness has, it would seem, been shown to be absolutely inconsistent with the evidence, but in either case we have, so far as the "scientific" bigot is concerned, an antiphrasis (from his own point of view) which exasperates him but which ought to comfort those who permit themselves to realise what even a single proven case of the manifestation of unembodied intelligence or semi-intelligence involves. That we are able to learn little more than this by such methods, however, now seems to be certain. Never, in any spiritualistic séance, has the slightest indication been given as to what happens to man after death, as to what his condition is, what are his delights and his pains. To regard the emanations that apparently manifest themselves in séances as being the actual individualities of dead human beings requires an amount of credulity of which most of us are incapable. That some sort of dreamlike intelligence is displayed by them, carrying with it occasionally such memory as exists in dreams, we must admit; but we do not have to admit that the soul, the divine part of man, is concerned in these pitifully inane "messages."

The psychical research societies will, I think, before long devote more attention than hitherto to certain

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phenomena, or alleged phenomena, the examination of which would be of far more value to us than millions of reports of séances under "test" conditions. If only one case of the return of a soul to earth, of reincarnation, could be proved, man would have made an immense advance toward an understanding, not of the meaning and the mystery of life, but of his own immediate fate. The Orientals are well aware of this. They pay no attention to the phenomena obtained through mediums; their attitude, indeed, suggesting that it is all an old story to them, and a story that is not worth the telling. But they take infinite pains to examine any report of a child remembering a previous existence, and such cases, it may be remarked, are reported only of children. To many, perhaps to most adults there have come at times strange intuitions, shadows of what seem memories, a sense of previous knowledge of ancient cities visited for the first time; but actual memory of past existence has, if it has ever been displayed, been confined to the very young. The most detailed and convincing report of such a case that I have read is given by Lafcadio Hearn—a translation of a number of long, official Japanese documents, signed and sealed, the names of the witnesses and their evidence all in proper order.

And yet, even should we be satisfied of the truth of this story, and of other similar stories, what a little way it would really go toward the solution of the mystery! For people make in regard to death and in

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regard to what, each in his own way, they conceive to be man's condition after death, a universal but obvious error.

What reason is there to suppose that the chances and accidents of our own phase of existence cease at the moment of death ? Why should we believe that the processes that we call natural will not continue after death ? We make mistakes with our bodies, and suffer. Accidents occur to us, and we suffer. And yet the belief that accident ceases at death and that the next phase of our existence—whatever it may be—will provide for us a system utterly unlike our own, a system of perfectly ordered rewards and punishments, of compensation for suffering in this world, of retribution for fortune unjustly gained—this belief, this hope, provide continual consolation.

Any method of thought that does not admit the existence of chance, of accident, in our present lives appears to me quite impossible. Is it necessary to give examples ? Think of the sinking of the *Titanic* ; think of the thousands of children killed every year by motor cars, drowning, many other accidents ; think of the individual cases of stupid, meaningless tragedy—the best of all the Tsars slain by one of those whom he was trying to benefit, the discoverer of radium crushed by a waggon, the venerated “ Father of the Greater New York ” shot by a negro, who mistook him for someone else ; Marlowe killed in a brawl, Paracelsus murdered by jealous doctors. No,

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the theory of *karma* will not do : at any rate, the human mind is incapable of accepting it as explanatory of this aspect of our human life. And, as what we call accident is part of the Law under which we live, if there be life after death, why should we suppose that the Law is changed ?

The wind breathed softly over Messina, the sun shone, the Mediterranean was sparkling and blue. And yet, a few days before, there had, in that place, suddenly, terribly, ended many thousands of lives, young and old, good and bad—all stopped together. Each of these lives had its own travails, its desires, ambitions, struggles, battles, hopes, ideals. And as I walked among the ruins of what a week before had been a beautiful city, with fountains, colonnades, palaces, churches of inlaid marble, now all thrown to the ground, the last of my faith in a scheme of things “ordered”—from the human point of view—departed from me. Death was all around me, and, worse than death, the dying who could not be saved. That “Providence” had arranged all this, the torture of innocent children, the annihilation of entire families except, perhaps, an aged grandmother willing enough to die—this I refused to believe.

And we have no right to conceive death as the dividing line between our present condition of non-intervention by the Power or Powers that made us or that we are, and active intervention. Whatever process takes place at death, and after death, in other

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words, is in all probability a process as "natural" as the order under which we live, in which order accident is an essential feature.

The manner in which we contrive to deceive ourselves in regard to death is one of the strangest phenomena of Western thought. "Death," says one writer, "is a mere break in the infinite continuity of our being." How can it be that, for if there were infinite continuity in our being, we would all remember what we were—if we were anything—before our birth into this world. Our lives may be infinite, but continuity, in the sense of permanence of conscious personality, cannot exist, unless we are willing to believe that the permanent conscious life of each of us is created at the birth of the body that he now occupies, that when each of us was born a new soul was made.

How, then, can we hope? How can we escape the belief that it all ends in oblivion, as it began in oblivion? The infinite pains that have been spent on the meanest of us; babyhood with its warmth and cherishing, childhood with its mysteries and its vivid emotions; the teaching and travail and conflict, the struggles and the battles with desire, the ambitions, hopes, ideals—must it not all end at death, and, for the being in whom it centred, become as though it had never been?

No, we do not have to believe this; but what we are compelled to believe is that, in the present stage of our development, we suffer oblivion, pass through

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the waters of Lethe, if not at death, then at some time after death, if we are among those who are reborn into this world. And those who are reborn, if we are to believe the wise men of the East, are those who love the world.

That is to say, the great Law holds good for the individual as for mankind. The soul's sinking into matter carries with it the curse of matter, which is death.

Even though they can tell us nothing, those who have seen the most clearly, have penetrated farthest beyond the veil of sense, have always been the least afraid to die, the most assured that death is not the end. The mystics of all religions have had no fear ; the greatest poets have faced the future confident and clear-eyed, and, as William James tells us, even those who have worked the hardest in the mystifying field of psychical research have gained courage and happiness.¹ For most of us, the confidence that comes from

¹ "Frederic Myers and Richard Hodgson . . . lived exclusively for psychical research, and it converted both to spiritism. Hodgson would have been a man among men anywhere ; but I doubt whether under any other baptism he would have been that happy, sober and righteous form of energy which his face proclaimed him in his later years, when heart and head alike were wholly satisfied by his occupation. Myers's character also grew stronger in every particular for his devotion to the same inquiries. . . . He was made over again from the day when he took up psychical research seriously. He became learned in science, circumspect, democratic in sympathy, endlessly patient, and above all, happy " ("Memories and Studies," p. 194).

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the intuition of the mystic, the poet, the prophet is impossible, and such comfort as we can obtain must come from such clear thinking as we can command. We can, for example, understand the strange modification of the law of accident which the late J. H. Shorthouse discussed in an apologue that seems to me to contain more concentrated wisdom than dozens of the volumes of the masters of metaphysics, but which the author of "John Inglesant" referred to, in his diffident way, in a letter to Prof. Knight, as containing "the germ of a good deal of stiff writing." Mr Shorthouse makes the speakers in his apologue the King of Diamonds and the King of Clubs, cards in a game of bezique. The King of Diamonds is clever, the other stupid. They are discussing what happens to them in the game, and finally the King of Diamonds says :—

"I think it must be plain to everyone . . . even to the most stupid, that we are governed by a higher intellect than our own ; that as the cards fall from the pack . . . they are immediately subjected to analysis and arrangement, by which the utmost possible value is extracted from these chance contingencies, and that, not unfrequently, the results which chance itself seemed to predict are reversed. This analysis and arrangement, and these results, we cards have learnt to call intellect (or mind), and to attribute it to an order of beings superior to ourselves, by whom our destinies are controlled. . . . But what I wish to call your attention to, is a more

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abstruse conception which I myself have obtained with difficulty. . . . It has occurred to me that even the fall of the cards is the result merely of more remote contingencies, and is resolvable into laws and systems similar to those to which they are afterwards subjected. I was led at first to form this conception by an oracular voice which I once heard, whether in trance or vision I cannot say. The words I heard were somewhat like these :

“ ‘ If we could sufficiently extend our insight we should see that every apparently chance contingency is but the result of previous combinations infinitely extended, that the relation of the cards in that pack, so mysterious to us, is not only by a higher intellect clearly perceived, but is seen to be the only possible result of such previous combinations ; that all existence is but the result of previous existence, and that chance is lost in law. But side by side with this truth exists another of more stupendous import, that, just as far as this truth is recognised and perceived, just so far step by step springs into existence a power by which law is abrogated, and the apparent course of its iron necessity is changed. To these senseless cards ’ (whom the voice here alluded to I fail to see), ‘ to these senseless cards, doubtless, the game appears nothing but an undeviating law of fate. We know that we possess a power by which the fall of the cards is systematised and controlled. To a higher intelligence than ours, doubtless, combinations which seem to us inscrutable are as easily analysed and controlled.

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In proportion as intellect advances we know this to be the case, and these two would seem to run back side by side into the Infinite—Law, and Intellect which perceives Law, until we arrive at the insoluble problem, whether Law is the result of intellect, or intellect of Law.' These were the remarkable words I heard." ¹

And this may be our hope and our belief, our solace and our lamp to find the way to peace—that humanity will, in the end, be able to control the blind and evil forces that now afflict us ; that, under the Law which governs us, we shall be delivered from the *body of this death* ; that the great Design will be made clear, all will be explained, and we be free. But surely the power of disorder in the world was never so great as it is to-day, the power of chance in human affairs never so terrible. That life which, in old Chaucer's words, " Nys but a maner death what way we trace," has become, through the " progress " of these days, more perilous than ever before. Nature, even where she is angriest and most treacherous, gives man respite of many years : in our cities of to-day there is no thoughtful man who, when he leaves his home in the morning, is not careful of what he puts in his pockets, in case his end should come suddenly.

Somewhen, Chance and Law will come together, and then the secret of Life will be ours. To try to understand it now is to try to weigh the fire.

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, July 1882:

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It is so little that we know ! Amid the infinite complexities that surround us, we can be sure of nothing, except that we are as strangers and pilgrims, as animals unnatural, as angels bestial. Far sunk in the misery of matter, we have to intoxicate ourselves to gain any release, and the "melancholia that transcends all wit" is the lot of everyone who dares to think. For us, such hope as men held only three hundred years ago has gone. No more can we look forward to an existence after death sweet as music at a banquet of wine, joined in comfort with the choir of angels, singing hosannas and hallelujahs to Him that sitteth upon the throne. These sentences, from a funeral sermon of 1659, are meaningless now, but the dedication of that sermon, by Thomas Pierce, rector of Brington, to Mistress Elizabeth Peyto of Chesterton, is still full of solemn import. "We are fallen," he says, "into an age whose very iron hath gathered rust, wherein the most do live, as if they verily thought they should never die." If this were true in the seventeenth century, when, it seems to us, every sermon and every book on divinity was overfull of warnings about death, what must we think of our own recklessness ? I have said that every normal man of forty ponders much on death. This is true, but it is dying that we now fear, not the fate that may be in store for us after we are dead.

Surely the meaning is plain. As humanity descends, the individual descends, and our attitude towards life and towards death is another evidence of the truth

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of the thesis that I set out to prove. We despise the thought of the past. Though we are willing enough to recognise the beauty of the art and the poetry that it has given to us, we deny the truth of the ideas and the beliefs that gave birth to that beauty, were the inspiration of those who painted and carved so surely, wrote with such skill. And yet, many a thinker must have felt that these men of the past knew more than ourselves of the Order to which we are for a while compelled.

.
I have referred to the intense desire of the Orientals to satisfy themselves as to the truth of any report regarding what appears to be memory of a previous existence. They are also very curious of another manifestation of the operation of those laws of which we, in our wisdom, are indifferent.

There would seem to be what can only be described as a ritual attending the change that is death. The struggle, the lovely green fields, the photographic panorama of all the life of the dying man—so many who have been snatched from death testify to these things that we are almost in a position to suppose a law that makes the passage from the visible to the unknown, instead of something terrible, a beautiful and solemn ceremony. Whatever may await us afterward, the blazing river of the Elysian fields, hell, or purgatory or paradise, the passage from this “Shaba world,” as the Japanese call it, this world in which we now find ourselves, as distinct from other,

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spiritual worlds, is glorious as the birth of the butterfly from its grey chrysalis. Whether all pass through this strange and lovely passage into a final sleep or into a new awaking, we cannot tell ; for those who have related this experience, who have gazed into the door of death and returned, have been those whose brains have been spared by the agency that brought them so near to the final change.

And so, it is all a mystery still. Search where we may, we can find no final answer to the one question that we always ask. And yet, why ask it ? I have tried to outline some of the difficulties that confront those of us who try sincerely to find a solution of this problem of the soul of man after the death of the body. But, in truth, there are no difficulties. We *know* that we live on. I do not believe that in his inmost soul—and the very expression “inmost soul ” that we use so often is in itself a hint of man’s intuitive knowledge of the truth—I do not believe that even Haeckel really expects to die.

The souls of some are continually aflame, with a divine inexhaustible fire ; of others the souls are bound, and the light within is dim. But of each of us the soul is, must be, his own for ever.

What befalls us we cannot know. Perhaps our brain-memory is lost for a time ; perhaps even the mind of a Sappho, reborn in a Sarojini Naidu, must pass through Lethe. But the soul remains.

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Even to the least observant of us, it is evident that there is something *behind* the brain. We *watch* ourselves continually, and what is it that watches ?

Take a sea-shell, and place in it a light. There is a sunset, made before your eyes, and each shell is glorious in its own way, showing a different harmony of rose and pearl, of chrysoprase and vermilion and gold. And, as the sunset is mirrored in the shell, so is the individual soul, tiny and weak, a part and a reflection of the Soul of all the Spheres. And, as the clouds and the mist become radiant only by means of the sun, and the shell becomes glorious only when the light is within it, so does the Soul show its divinity only when the fire that is of God, and is of itself, is seen through it and becomes part of it.

It is all as mysterious as the colours themselves : for who can explain what colour is, and why it should be ? May we not regard it, with music and with flowers, as a manifestation of the divine that is in all things ?

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THERE is a strange story in Guicciardini, of a Roman girl, buried in the first century, whose body was found fourteen hundred years afterwards, when the humanists were searching, beneath every mound and dust-heap, for the hidden treasures of the past. In some unknown way, by means of some marvellous process, the body had been preserved in all the freshness of life. The pink and white of the maiden's cheeks, her rosy lips, her yellow pride of hair, were all undimmed by corruption. There she lay as, when Tiberius was the Cæsar, she was at the moment of her death. And she was beautiful beyond belief.

Such is the story that Guicciardini tells, and we have it also from Infessura, and Matarazzo, and Nantiporto. Moreover, in a recently discovered letter from Bartholomæus Fontius to his friend Franciscus Saxethus, the body is minutely described.

To those old humanists of the Renaissance, there was no explanation for it but magic. But little they cared. To the painter, to the scholar, to the lover of the things of the past—and who in that time was not *temporis acti* a worshipper?—this new-found wonder was an inspiration beyond what could be gained from

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carven stone or clear-cut gem. From far and near the painters came, and found the ideal that they had sought so long realised, incarnate, at last. And, we are told, it was this lovely miracle that, more than any glory of face or form of woman living then, inspired those pictures of strange, mystical beauty that Botticelli and Leonardo wrought.

The story is a symbol. True, or a dream—and our historians are becoming a little more careful in stamping everything they cannot explain as on that account an impossibility—it is full of meaning for us, and passion, and dim sacredness. On a winter's afternoon in Rome I had been again reading it, and then, as the twilight came, I watched the great mass of the Vatican darken and darken, and the Castle of St Angelo grow indistinguishable. Rome, mysterious and wise, holy and wicked, lay beneath me in the purple shadow, and at length only the outline of Michelangelo's Dome remained. Under that dome, in the crypt of the basilica, they placed the body of the Roman maiden, and then, rumour went in the city, the Pope, believing it to be an accursed thing, had it carried beyond the walls by night and hidden in a secret grave. It is a wonder he did not have it burned!

And as I sat there in the Pincian Garden, I realised what Joachim du Bellay meant when he wrote that Rome was "like a corpse drawn forth out of the tomb, out of the eternal night, by a magic skill." Yes, the

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story is symbolic, symbolic of that universal and immemorial longing of mankind for the past, for what it has lost, for its vanished glory, for the "divinity in it that was before the elements and owes no homage unto the Sun."¹

And so we return to the question with which this essay began. Have I been able to show that the fascination of matter, the power of matter over our souls, has continued to increase, has become greater even though century after century has given the fruit of its pain and its learning to mankind? The world is not as we would have it, but as it is—a desolation, a dark night, when all seems vague and formless. I have tried to indicate that there is a way

¹ That there was a secret traditional process of embalming in the past, a process far superior to that of the Egyptians, now appears to be certain. The Phœnicians, seemingly, were among the peoples who possessed it. That it was very sacred and secret, very costly, and employed very infrequently, is equally evident. It is strange that more references to the discovery of the body of the Roman girl have not been found. Surely they must exist in some of the many letters of the late fifteenth century that have been preserved. Niccolo Michelozzi, Guidantonio Vespucci, and half-a-hundred other courtiers, ambassadors, and scholarly hangers-on were writing continually to Lorenzo de' Medici, giving to Il Magnifico every scrap of news likely to interest him, gathered from every quarter. Dr Dorini and Cavalieri Bruschi might be asked to look in the Archivio Medicei for any record of the finding in 1485 of the body of Myrrha—that was the maiden's name, chiselled on her tomb.

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of hope, have tried to offer a suggestion as to where a medicine for our sickness may be found.

Our chill and spiritless lives of to-day lead many to madness and to suicide, but a brave soul can fight it all, and can win. We have much to fight. No Heracles battling against the Hydra, no saint tempted by the powers of Hell, had need of more courage than ourselves, in this crepuscular time when vices are virtues, when at every turn in the streets we find an aphrodisiac, when life is vertiginous in its attractiveness, and all seems to cry out to us that Matter is all and Soul does not exist.

And yet, those who live now are perhaps fortunate. More than once in the preceding pages I have expressed the hope that we are near the nadir, the turning point of the circle ; but I fear that the world has to go through a bitter time of struggle, and misery, and despair, before the light now so dim becomes bright and clear. The signs of these times are plain : none who thinks can fail to see their significance. *Disorder* is everywhere, unhappiness and fear and hatred. And the overmastering emotion is fear—fear of death—for life is now regarded as all that we have, and we are frightened by its terrible brevity, more afraid of losing it than men have ever been before.

.
It is not only those who have sunk the deepest who fear : we all fear. Some of us fear that what we have loved and tried to understand will vanish and be wasted, that all we have dreamed of beauty and per-

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fection will be forgotten and come to nothing. We ask ourselves if, in that other life, if other life there be, we can find the things exquisite, exotic, strange, that had the power to charm us in this old, unhappy, dear world of to-day. Will there be Greek vases for us, and Persian tiles of subtle colour, and gems with intaglios, with magic in every line, and old illuminations, bindings, engravings ? Will La Gioconda haunt us with her delicious smile, and Botticelli's unearthly dancers fill us with longing to pierce the secret of beauty ?

Bewilderment and illusion it is, according to some theosophies ; part of the curse of those who wear the body ; all an intoxicant ; all *máyá*. And yet the work of the violet-weaving Muses is very dear to us. Life remains sweet, even though we despair, is perhaps the more sweet because we despair. We yet have the love of women, and the seas to soothe us, and the flowers and trees and sky, and the dreams of dead poets, the visions of dead painters. We may despair, but we watch the pageant of the past, the glory of the kings ; we are guests at banquets where the wine-cups are wreathed with roses. And if sleep, and forgetfulness of all, must be the end, we try to tell ourselves that it will not matter.

There is an atom in infinite space which is my soul, my self ; and yet, to me, the infinite that surrounds me revolves around this atom, is of significance only as it affects this atom that is I. It is only in moments

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of extreme exaltation that we can see something of the meaning of it all. Then, we see that they are right who desire and expect absorption in the great Ocean of Being. This is not extinction ; it is blessedness. Plato is of it, and Shakespeare, Sappho and Dante, Tennyson and Rossetti and Goethe. They are all part of us and we are part of them. The glory and the love and the wonder of it are beyond our imagining, but sometimes, very seldom, we catch a glimpse of it over that great gulf which divides us from the real, which divides us from ourselves. The thread that binds us to what is above is never cut. Its tiny length extends to the most degraded, the most terrible and animal and vile.

And this thread, this ray of the divine, is what makes man akin to the angels and a son of God. It is what makes him a drunkard and a seer, the only being in the world who is unnatural, the only being who can apprehend even in slight degree what Nature means. It is not man's harmony with Nature that causes him to love her ; it is his divergence from Nature ; and the greater the divergence, the greater to him the loveliness of flowers and sea and sky, mountains and moonlight and stars. Even for those to whom life is a series of disillusionments—and this means most of us—life is so infinitely varied and so wonderful that we always find new illusions. And so we pass on, and he who can suffer the most can enjoy the most, until, at the end, we are still eager, still crave more life, more knowledge, more fruit of life

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to taste, even though all we have tasted before be Dead Sea fruit.

The desire of man for life, his never-appeased appetite for all that life has to give, his never-satisfied curiosity—all this is a manifestation of the clay of which he is created. His yearning for the past, for the effulgence from the everlasting Light of which he has a dim memory, his yearning for the radiance of Wisdom and of Love, his frequent self-intoxication in the desire to escape—this is a manifestation of the divine Fire, the soul that is himself, liable neither to birth nor to death, unborn, eternal, unchangeable.

Souvenez vous, hommes,
De la vie d'autrefois,
Quand Elle habitait avec nous ? ¹

This longing has existed always and everywhere, but the clairvoyants among men have seen further—have seen into the future, and have been frightened. “You may count him happy,” said Luther after the death of Albrecht Dürer, “that Christ so enlightened him and took him in good time from stormy scenes, destined to become still stormier, so that he who was worthy of seeing only the best should not be compelled to experience the worst.” That “worst” which Luther foresaw did not become the worst in his day, has perhaps not become the worst in our day.

¹ From Pierre Louÿs's translation of the “Pax” of Aristophanes.

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But however far we sink, however attenuated the thread may become, we will continue dimly to remember, a spark will still remain to us of that glory from which we have fallen, and to which we struggle to return. And beauty will continue to take the sting from Death, and man from his great amazing will in the end come to know himself, and to know God, and to be free.

Alone of animate beings, man is conscious of imperfection, of lack of completeness, of his failure as yet to fulfil the object of his being. The only unsatisfied creature, he is also the only unnatural creature. His progress has come through drunkenness ; to live intensely he must destroy his life. There is no happiness for man. The birds and the bees are happy, the free-roving lion and swift wild horse. All men are unhappy, and the unhappiest are those who have progressed the most, the least unhappy the savages and the slaves.

For man must pay for his soul's descent, and must pay the full price.

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